



ELISE ARCHIAS

THE CONCRETE BODY

YVONNE RAINER | CAROLEE SCHNEEMANN | VITO ACCONCI

The Concrete Body



The Concrete Body

Yvonne Rainer, Carolee Schneemann, Vito Acconci

Elise Archias

Yale University Press New Haven and London

Illustrations in this book were funded in part by a grant from the Meiss/Mellon Author's Book Award of the College Art Association.



Copyright © 2016 by Elise Archias.

All rights reserved.

This book may not be reproduced, in whole or in part, including illustrations, in any form (beyond that copying permitted by Sections 107 and 108 of the U.S. Copyright Law and except by reviewers for the public press), without written permission from the publishers.

yalebooks.com/art

Designed by Leslie Fitch
Typeset by Tina Henderson
Printed in China by Regent
Publishing Services Limited

Library of Congress Control
Number: 2015956227
ISBN 978-0-300-21797-1

A catalogue record for this book is
available from the British Library.

This paper meets the requirements
of ANSI/NISO Z39.48-1992 (Perma-
nence of Paper).

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Jacket illustrations: (*front*) Carolee
Schneemann, *Meat Joy*, 1964 (detail
of fig. 66); (*back*) Vito Acconci,
Blindfolded Catching, June 1970 (detail
of fig. 77).

Frontispiece: Yvonne Rainer,
Northeast Passing, 1968. Goddard
College, Plainfield, Vt., 1968. Photo
by Barry Goldensohn. Yvonne
Rainer Papers, Getty Research
Institute, Los Angeles. © Barry
Goldensohn.

CONTENTS

Acknowledgments	vii
Introduction. When the Body Is the Material	1
1 Hurray for People: Yvonne Rainer	30
2 Concretions: Carolee Schneemann	77
3 Reasons to Move: Vito Acconci	122
Coda. Forming the Senses	164
Notes	183
Bibliography	205
Index	219
Illustration Credits	225

For the observers and the idealists

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Nearly every line in the following pages is in some way addressed to gifts received from one of six people. I thank Yvonne Rainer, Carolee Schneemann, and Vito Acconci for giving form to ideas we can trust; Anne Wagner and Tim Clark for an education as joyous as it was demanding; and Blake Stimson for conversations that helped this book begin to claim and then sing its political desires.

Over the years that the book was written, more people than I can name read or heard pieces of its contents, and I am grateful to each for providing the listening necessary for any writer's work to exist. The text has been particularly etched and enriched by the feedback from two more mentors: Kaja Silverman, who from the beginning helped me to understand the high stakes of thinking about the body as a sign, and Darcy Grigsby, who when I was studying for my exams asked me a question about civil-rights-era photography that I finally answered in the last few months of work on the book. I also thank the many friends made in the community around the University of California Berkeley and in the San Francisco Bay Area for their incisive and passionate responses to not only my work but each other's. In roughly chronological order of influence, I want to thank André Dombrowski, Sarah Hamill, Jessica Buskirk, Joshua Shannon, Jeremy Melius, Ara Merjian, Chris Nagler, Paddy Riley, Julia Bryan-Wilson, Julian Myers-Szupinska, Sabine Kriebel, Beth Dungan, John Tain, Anthony Grudin, Joni Spigler, Todd Cronan, Anne Byrd, Sarah Evans, Curtis Dozier, Deb Kamen, Lauri Reitzammer, Liz Young, Chris Agee, Donna Hunter, Ellen Babcock, Matthew Jesse Jackson, Jonathan Katz, and Elizabeth Ferrell—with very special thanks to Bibi Obler and Huey Copeland for their critical advice and unflagging support over the long haul. In Chico my new research was lucky to have an audience that included Robert Jones and Dennis Rothermel. In 2011–12 James Nisbet, Tirza True Latimer, Janet Dees, the late Karin Higa, and Simon Leung all helped me figure out what I was saying about Rainer. Benjamin Widiss and Jason Baskin offered recognition of the project over multiple MSA and ASAP conferences. Among my colleagues at UIC, Nina Dubin and Esra Akcan offered key assistance as I was pitching the book to Yale; Matthew Metzger provided new painterly ways to think about *Trio A*; Hannah Higgins offered an energizing response as I was rethinking the book's framing; and Jennifer Ashton and Walter Benn Michaels helped me to think more precisely about intention.

Later in the process, the book benefited from a rewarding round of dialogue with Rebecca Schneider; from a reading of the manuscript by Eve Meltzer, whose structural-affective lens helped to sharpen the book's intentions in crucial ways; and from the illuminating critical diligence of an anonymous reviewer for Yale University Press.

I extend thanks to all of the students on whom I have tested out ideas over the years, with special appreciation for exchanges with Willow Sharkey at Chico State and with the students in the Concrete Body seminar at uic in spring 2013, with special thanks to Aaron Ott for his remarkable Schneemann research.

I am grateful for feedback from audiences at conferences hosted by the College Art Association, the Modernist Studies Association, the Feminist Art History Association in Washington, DC, *Historical Materialism* in London, and from Peggy Phelan's Mellon seminar at Stanford, The Politics of Action. For further opportunities to present the book's research, I thank the Getty Research Institute and the audience for the Movement and the Visual Arts symposium, with special thanks to Glenn Phillips, Andrew Perchuk, Carrie Lambert-Beatty, and Babette Mangolte; Blake Stimson and the Art History Program at UC Davis; Ellen Babcock and the Department of Art and Art History at the University of New Mexico; Nina Dubin and uic's Department of Art History via Gallery 400 (before I became a faculty member); Simon Leung and the Department of Studio Art at UC Irvine; Sonal Khullar and the Art History Division at the University of Washington and the Henry Art Gallery; Kaja Silverman and the audience for her Mellon symposium at the University of Pennsylvania, *Abstraction and Beyond*; David Getsy and the Department of Art History, Theory, and Criticism at the School of the Art Institute Chicago; and Chicago's Society for Contemporary Art. Each of these talks helped to shape the chapters that follow.

Sincere thanks to the staffs of the archives at the Getty Research Institute, Fales Library and Special Collections at New York University, the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, the Museum of Modern Art Library Archives, the Smithsonian Archives of American Art, Electronic Arts Intermix New York, and the World Performance Project at Yale University.

Research and writing were supported, in chronological order, by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Fellowship in Humanistic Studies, the UC Berkeley Graduate Opportunity Fellowship, UC Berkeley History of Art Department, the William & Hazel Pecoraro Graduate Fellowship in History of Art, the UC Berkeley Graduate Division, the Robert & Susan Katz Foundation, UC Berkeley Dean's Normative Time Fellowship, two Getty Research Institute Library Research Grants, the Department of Art and Art History at CSU Chico, with special thanks to Michael Bishop, Matthew Looper, Asa Mittman, and Sheri Simons; the Echo Park hospitality of Amar Ravva and Amina Cain; the Westwood hospitality of John Tain; the CSU Chico College of Humanities; a seven-month residential fellowship at the Georgia O'Keeffe Museum Research Center in 2011, with special thanks to Barbara Buhler Lynes, Carolyn Kastner, and Eumie Imm Stroukoff; spatial synergy with Gayle Kuldell in Santa Fe; uic's Department of Art History; a semester of

research assistance from Cassy Smith at UIC; a Dean's Research Prize from UIC's College of Architecture and the Arts, with special thanks to Judith Russi Kirshner; a Dean's Research Prize from UIC's College of Architecture, Design, and the Arts, with special thanks to Steve Everett; and a course reduction in spring 2014 by UIC's School of Art and Art History, with special thanks to Lisa Lee and the Art History faculty.

At Yale University Press, sincere thanks go to my editor Amy Canonico for her wisdom and efficiency, and to Katherine Boller for first recognizing the project. I am grateful to Heidi Downey for graceful management of the editing process, and Miranda Ottewell for eagle-eyed but sensitive copy editing.

The book's illustrations were made possible by a generous grant through the College Art Association's Miess/Mellon Author's Book Award; the UIC Office of Faculty Affairs Faculty Support Scholarship; UIC's College of Architecture, Design, and the Arts; and through the generosity of those artists, galleries, and archivists who waived or reduced their image fees. Special thanks to Vito Acconci and Chris Dierks at Acconci Studio for illustrating chapter 3 so exquisitely; and to Virginia Moklaveskas and the staff at the Getty Research Institute Special Collections Library for their meticulous support of my image needs in the Rainer and Schneemann Papers.

Finally I thank Virginia Hawkins for her transformative recognition, and my father and sisters, Joe, Catherine, and Mary Archias, for showing that paths away from tragedy can lead toward the love of the world.



Introduction

When the Body Is the Material

In a photograph taken in 1963 during a performance of Yvonne Rainer's evening-length dance *Terrain*, two young men in tights stand on a scuffed stage behind a traffic blockade brought in from the street (fig. 1). They rest their hands and wrists on the blockade's smudged horizontal bar, looking off to the right as if waiting for a signal that they do not expect to come anytime soon or to require them to move quickly when it does. People waiting for instructions from a supervisor or for a teller or cashier to open her station might stand in exactly this way. Such poses appeared to Rainer's audience in 1963 as utterly, liberatingly ordinary. The dancer in the background of the photo, trying to lift his pretzel-shaped lower body off the ground with his arms, only underscores the fact that the men at the front of the stage are doing something anyone could do. For Rainer and her contemporaries in the downtown New York scene that this book focuses on—as well as for artists in Tokyo, Paris, Rio de Janeiro, Prague, London, and elsewhere—embracing ordinary things, gestures, and sounds over virtuosic skill promised a democratic shift for art, out of museums and studios and into the extra-artistic realm of everyday life.

Experimental work with performance such as Rainer's held a high status among those who shared this artistic philosophy. Nearly eliminating the art object altogether, live art accessed aspects of everyday life directly rather than representing them in a mediated form like the painting and sculpture of the past had done. Performance seemed capable of escaping the art market's high price tags, entrenched class identifications, and the burden of stuff associated with the new consumer economy. Yet for all of *Terrain*'s anti-art everydayness, it is not the fact that the men's gestures can be identified as ordinary that makes this photograph of the dance so compelling. What keeps one looking and looking again—and thus makes the work stand up over time as art—are subtle variations that become visible across two bodies when duplicating a gesture imprecisely. Both men shift their weight onto one leg, for example, but the lighter, unweighted foot on one man arches deliberately with ankles crossed to form a prop, while the other's gently slopes and casually rests its sole on the standing foot; one man's hands touch letters that spell a fragment of the word *foundation*, while the other's fingertips brush against one of the sawhorse legs that form the blockade's actual base; one chin juts slightly forward, the other pulls back, questioning; the two necks are exposed differently in the light, but reveal similarly linear tendons extending

FIGURE 1

Yvonne Rainer, *Terrain*, 1963.
Judson Memorial Church,
New York, April 28 or 29, 1963.
Performers: William Davis, Steve
Paxton, Albert Reid. Photo by Al
Giese. Yvonne Rainer Papers, Getty
Research Institute, Los Angeles.

from ear to heart. Such details cannot each be assigned a precise meaning, but they give the ordinary gestures texture, and if they were not there, the leaning and waiting would not be able to stand as convincingly for the everyday. Rainer's approach to choreography foregrounded this sort of bodily nuance. *Terrain*, while untraditional in many ways, sets up a relationship between recognizable structures and the body as an unruly material that shows Rainer holding on to something of what many modernist artists from earlier in the twentieth century had long understood: that art is best when it tempers its necessary artifice and abstraction with an equally strong acknowledgment that it exists in the same physical world as the human actors who make and behold it. If an artwork leans too far in either direction—by becoming too stylized or not stylized enough—it cannot function as a metaphor for an embodied engagement with the physical world and with the conventions ordering that world. In the standing, jogging, and sweating bodies of Rainer's highly structured performance scores, in other words, an older notion of sensuous human practice persisted.

During the first half of the twentieth century, artists had relied upon and cultivated abstract formal languages to figure the relations between human beings and broader cultural structures, and past viewers had understood these modernist framings of materiality, sensation, grids, planes, and bits of text to evoke (often critically) the political and social conditions of mid-twentieth-century life from a distance, without direct or easy resemblance. The 1960s artists and audiences were less trusting. "Actual space is intrinsically more powerful and specific than paint on a flat surface," the artist and critic Donald Judd pronounced on behalf of his generation in 1965, dismissing without regret the old idea that the physical and spatial relationships suggested in a painting offered "clearer instances of a similar world."¹ Although the dominant majority in the art world shared Judd's values, some critics at the time questioned whether this refusal of abstraction in the 1960s entailed a loss for art, akin to capitalist culture's displacement of everyday processes of sensuous understanding with images and products that encouraged an instrumentalizing relationship with the world.² Cast in this light, much 1960s New York performance art seems desperately literal, as if the concrete particularity of everyday sensuous experience needed to be present inside the frame of art because the audience's grasp of it everywhere else was slipping away.

Like Judd, Rainer, Carolee Schneemann, and Vito Acconci answered their audience's need for an art whose relationship to the everyday world was more actual than similar, but they did not exclude the potentially "clearer instances" afforded by more distanced, less categorizable moments of abstraction. Counter to Judd's recommendation, they brought together abstract form and the lived immediacy of everyday life rather than choosing one over the other. Between roughly 1960 and 1971, each achieved this joining by making the physicality of the ordinary body a source of texture and pattern for viewers to perceive and interpret. Through this abstraction born of physical materials, art could still "incorporate contemporary feeling," as Clement Greenberg put it in 1948, writing about painting.³ But the abstraction was newly collapsed onto a live body, seemingly inseparable from its

FIGURE 2

Joan Mitchell in her St. Mark's Place studio, New York, 1957. Photo by Rudy Burckhardt. Image courtesy of the Joan Mitchell Foundation.



everyday life, rather than played out in paint or clay, making the new forms inextricable from the social conditions to which they were intended as a response.

What the bodily presentation resulting from this approach said about how everyday embodied life in the United States felt in the 1960s is a larger question. On the one hand, human needs and the representations of them in consumer culture were increasingly and confusingly intertwined on television and in the new creative impulse of advertising; on the other, the civil rights movement was making powerful political statements through ordinary gestures like sitting at a lunch counter or walking to school. The ordinariness of the performers in works like *Terrain* makes them seem youthful, casual, even negative, but also exposed and vulnerable, with no narrative to justify asking an audience to sit and watch their mundane gestures for any length of time. For contrast, envision the 1950s photographs of Abstract Expressionist artists at work, limbs reaching energetically toward the authentic mark (fig. 2). Next to such full-body extensions, Rainer's dancers seem defended and constrained behind their protective barrier. Such art risks making its audience feel not recognized but bored and alienated, unsure what, if anything, is being offered for them to respond to. The critic and artist Fairfield Porter, though sympathetic to the modernist avant-garde, wrote that Allan Kaprow's new performances, the happenings, "devalue all art." Rather than "make something out of clichés or ordinary things or rubbish," Porter wrote, "he uses art and he makes clichés."⁴

To make these risks clearer, add to the photograph of Rainer's performance two more, by Schneemann and Acconci, where performing bodies again appear antiheroic, almost clownish, executing inelegant tasks diligently, their fleshly lack of control at odds



FIGURE 3
Carolee Schneemann, *Meat Joy*,
1964. Judson Memorial Church,
November 16, 17, or 18, 1964. Photo
by Al Giese. Carolee Schneemann
Papers, Getty Research Institute,
Los Angeles.

with their self-contained purposefulness. In an image of Schneemann's *Meat Joy* (1964), the bodies of four men and women fill the frame as if we are tumbling down a chute with them, their white skin stained in places with unidentifiable grime (fig. 3). Nearly naked, young and flexible, they busily apply things to each other, most notably dead, plucked, uncooked chickens and a firm sausage. With her thrown-back head—a gesture that would soon be easily imaginable as part of an advertisement as the ethos of sexual liberation became commodified—the woman at the center looks ecstatic, but there are so many knees and elbows jabbing into the picture's crosshatch of limbs that the shot also conveys a sense of impatient, panting awkwardness. The unintended postures and facial expressions that result from effort and giving in to gravity are, as in the Rainer example, brought to the fore in this performance, supplemented with the additional forms that pass over bodies' surfaces in response to touching and being touched. In a still from Acconci's even more uncomfortable performance for the film *Soap & Eyes* (1970), a long-haired man's black turtleneck contrasts with his suds-covered face and a misshapen glob of white foam that has landed on his chest (fig. 4). Even covered by the soapy mask, the face conveys clearly



FIGURE 4
Vito Acconci, *Soap & Eyes*,
June 1970. Super 8 film, black
and white, 3 minutes. Image
courtesy of Acconci Studio.

that it is screwed up in stinging pain, a reading supported by two tense hands that hover where they have just let go of their bowl, forgotten and suddenly useless. Though we have enough information to know the man's expression is only his body's mechanical response to the burning soap that he has, for some reason, just splashed into his eyes, it is hard not to read the contracted gaze, open mouth, and rigid torso also as signs of grief.

The performers in these artworks expose their nakedness, awkwardness, boredom, pleasure, or pain more matter-of-factly than we are used to seeing in performances for the camera. There is no highlighting of beautiful form, no legible context to explain their self-exposure, nor any expression of embarrassment or enticement when it occurs. The matter-of-factness makes these gestures and situations compellingly immediate, but the absence of any discernible reason for them—for becoming vulnerable in this way—makes them equally hard to interpret. As representatives of their moment in history, are they asserting their lack of concern with vulnerability as a position or statement—"You, like me, have a body," they say; "Accept it"—or is bodily vulnerability something to which they have become insensitive?



Precarious, ambiguous, material bodies outside of explanatory narrative contexts had, of course, been depicted or crafted in modernist artworks before. Think of *Madame Cézanne* with her taxidermized face and labial bathrobe in the 1880s (fig. 5), for example, or of the pitted and pressed backside of Auguste Rodin's headless *Walking Man* at the turn of the century (fig. 6), or of the absent body conjured by the swoops, handprints, and fallen

FIGURE 5

Paul Cézanne, *Madame Cézanne in a Yellow Armchair*, 1888–90. Oil on canvas, 31 $\frac{7}{8}$ × 25 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. (80.9 × 64.9 cm). The Art Institute of Chicago, Wilson L. Mead Fund, 1948.54



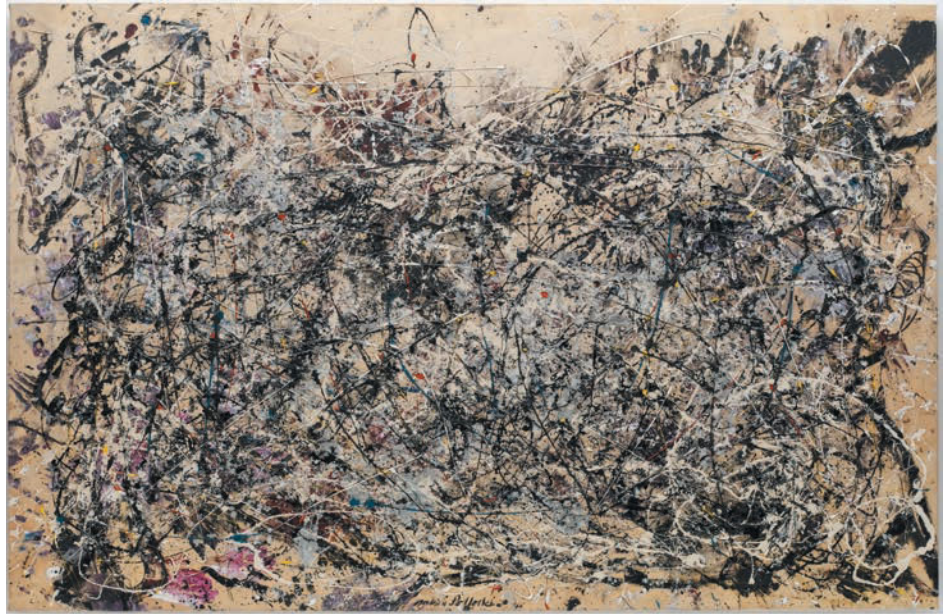
FIGURE 6

Auguste Rodin, *Walking Man* (*L'Homme qui marche*), 1900 (enlarged 1905, cast 1962). Bronze, 84 $\frac{1}{4}$ × 61 $\frac{5}{8}$ × 28 $\frac{7}{8}$ in. (214 × 155.8 × 73.1 cm). Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC, Gift of Joseph H. Hirshhorn, 1966. AN: 66.4343. Photo by Cathy Carver.



FIGURE 7

Jackson Pollock, *Number 1A*, 1948, 1948. Oil and enamel paint on canvas, 68 × 104 in. (172.7 × 264.2 cm). The Museum of Modern Art.



matter of paintings such as Jackson Pollock's *Number 1A*, 1948 from the years directly following World War II (fig. 7). Representations of embodiment and evocations of its materiality through materials other than the body abound in the twentieth century. But only in the 1960s did the vulnerability and intransigence of that material body become immediately and literally present in a performing body with the explicit intention to displace the traditional materials of painting and sculpture.⁵

This book leans on T. J. Clark's account of modernist painting for its understanding of the ways that avant-garde artists in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries responded to the spectacularization of culture by emphasizing the sort of techniques and procedures that art is especially equipped to convey as a concrete medium of communication. In Clark's 1982 discussion of the insights and limits of Greenberg's criticism, for example, he draws on the strand of Marxist thought that locates the basis for human society in "sensuous human activity, [or] practice." Clark emphasizes that modernist works by Édouard Manet, Paul Cézanne, Pablo Picasso, Pollock, and others foreground the physical processes of their making much more than works of the past had done, thereby asserting the artists' acceptance of the idea that, where meaning had once been found in the iconography of religious myth, social hierarchy, or accountings of wealth, "henceforth meaning can only be found in *practice*."⁶ By no means simply triumphant over the old sources of order and value, however, the practice that the modernist artworks display is "desperate," a "negation," a "work which is always pushing 'medium' to its limits—to its ending—to the point where it breaks or evaporates or turns back into mere unworked material." Meaning is precarious in these paintings, but nevertheless found. The artists evoke and engage the

long history of painting, but its status as a human language is challenged more than it ever has been by substances that humans did not create.

Pollock's *Number 1A, 1948* serves Clark as a clear example of a picture that is both doubtful of its own purpose (the scrawl can barely claim to communicate anything beyond its own clotted nothingness) and insistently composed (the thicket hovers almost tidily in the middle of the canvas, handprints respectfully tracking its edges). Similarly, though a Cézanne landscape is much more overtly representational than a Pollock, the physical qualities of oil paint and what has been done to it are strongly enough present that the painting—more than any document of a place—leaves for Clark above all a sense of “the vividness of procedure” involved in any attempt to make shareable sense of an embodied experience of the world.⁷

In this dialectic between the structure of the medium—which includes the expectations and conventions surrounding it—and the physicality of its materials, modernist art negates the visual language of a bourgeois culture that has betrayed its past revolutionary promises, but it persists in making a picture. It bears the tragedies that modernity's routinization, homogenization, and exploitation have brought to daily life, but it also offers, as the beginning of a solution, the awareness of that tragedy in its audience's collective social forms. How should practice go forward? modernism asks. It must go forward in a way that acknowledges contingency and failure and the fragility of human absolutes. It must accept that the physical world trumps human understanding every time, but that humans will continue to try to make sense of it, and that the shared aspect of that ever-renewed endeavor is what makes it real, in spite of its failure.

In its literalness, much of the art produced in New York in the 1960s all but refused the play between material and representation that animates so much modernist art. Bodies were only one category among many in the new language of non-art materials that encompassed Andy Warhol's soup cans and celebrities as easily as Robert Morris's index cards and plywood boxes (fig. 8). In such work, everyday, non-art material choices were meant to be appreciated for their refusal of traditional artistic modes of sensuousness, and their insistence that a new set of conditions deserved representation. Artists and their audiences “must become dazzled by the space and objects of our everyday life,” Kaprow wrote in a widely read and now well-known essay from 1958; “all will become materials for this new concrete art,” and artists “will discover out of ordinary things the meaning of ordinariness.”⁸ John Cage, one of Kaprow's teachers, similarly urged young composers to abandon “our inherited aesthetic claptrap,” and to “let sounds be themselves.”⁹ In this equation between concreteness and actual life among Cage's followers, there was an emphasis on allowing the viewer to have her own aesthetic experience, to find her own meaning, rather than be told what to feel by a great master, and the presence of ordinary-looking people and movement in a performance artwork could stand as a reminder of that priority.¹⁰ “We saw it as a massive refusal of our training,” Rainer explained in recent years, “an opening up of the palace gates of high culture.”¹¹ When palpable texture was present in

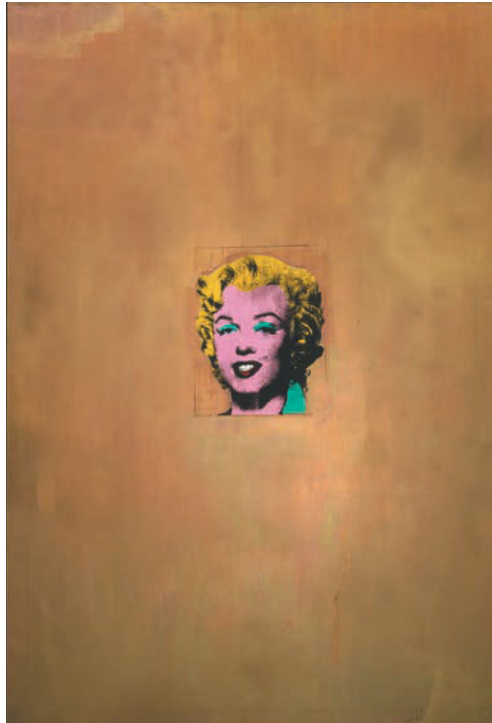


FIGURE 8

Andy Warhol, *Gold Marilyn Monroe*, 1962. Silkscreen ink on synthetic polymer paint on canvas, 83¼ × 57 in. (211.4 × 144.7 cm). The Museum of Modern Art. Gift of Philip Johnson.

Pop art such as Warhol's, it appeared defensively oblique or thin, always interpretable as merely an ironic reference to the past. Alternatively, in Fluxus artworks and happenings, an overwhelmed jumble of materials created so much texture that the line between world and work faded. Fluxus's kits and monochrome meals cultivated sensuousness, but gave it back to the world, to the viewer's immediate embodied experience, rather than framing and abstracting through artistic form.¹²

Some of the makers and supporters of this experimental art of everydayness discussed the embrace of the low as a critical response not just to recent art history but to modernity more broadly, claiming that the dollar sign, the time clock, and the empty promises of advertising had robbed everyday life of ritual and magic, and thus of intense sensuous experiences of every kind. The critic Van Meter Ames, for example—quoting influential curator Alan Solomon—championed the new art of Cage's followers in 1970 for what it redeemed: "Instead of rejecting the trash that makes up the environment and aesthetic experience of most Americans, the contemporary artist turns to what is all around us, with the ability to see it as a new wonderland rather than [a] 'wasteland of television commercials, comic strips, hot-dog stands, billboards, junkyards, hamburger joints, used car lots, jukeboxes, slot machines, and supermarkets.' Solomon asserts that here is 'the conscious triumph of man's inner resources of feeling . . . to a degree perhaps not possible since the Middle Ages.' The new art returns to the close relation between art and life for primitive people, the ancient Greeks, and our Pueblo Indians to this day."¹³ The new art,

for critics like Ames and Solomon, brought premodern wonder back into life. It accepted current circumstances in a desperate effort simply to relish the aesthetic pleasure to be found in the experience of them. These artists would accept postindustrial conditions, in other words, if they could evoke preindustrial emotional responses. Such critical responses to Cage and his influence point to what these critics felt to be missing from contemporary culture, which the inclusion of everyday materials could restore; but they also reveal the obstacles that such inclusiveness might pose to art's ability to criticize modern life, a goal that had been a defining characteristic of much work produced under the banner of modernism since the nineteenth century. Work that incorporates the everyday runs the risk of simply reproducing, endorsing, or making palatable the boredom, shallowness, and aggravations of modern consumer culture, rather than refiguring it in a way that undermines them.

For a less sympathetic set of critics, including Greenberg, the presence of "far-out" materials signaled a huge loss for art.¹⁴ In 1967 Greenberg criticized the broader "non-art" movement in New York for its failure to deal adequately with feeling, minimalist sculpture most egregiously.¹⁵ "Minimal art remains too much a feat of ideation, and not enough anything else," he pronounced; "the fact that the signals are understood for what they want to mean betrays them artistically." By contrast, the real "aesthetic surprise" that was modernism's dominion "hangs on forever—it is still there in Raphael as it is in Pollock—and ideas alone cannot achieve it." For Greenberg, recognizable materials and simple shapes were like concepts. Easy to grasp, they told the viewer what the artist was thinking about rather than creating an aesthetic encounter that called upon her sensory and emotional capacities as well as her knowledge of concepts.

Herbert Marcuse offered another articulation of this view in 1970, speaking on behalf of artistic form and against the urge to merge art and life. Art's difference from life was what had always made it radical, Marcuse explained, what had allowed it to "comprehend" the contradiction within modernity "and negate it."¹⁶ The "true avant-garde of our time, far from obscuring this distance [between Art and reality] . . . *enlarge* it," the better to underscore the "incompatibility" between art's material, felt concerns, and "the given reality" in which it struggles to make itself heard.

Rather than abandoning art's distancing techniques to embrace the everyday, Schneemann, Rainer, and Acconci—like Cézanne, Rodin, Cubist painters, and the Abstract Expressionists before them—disrupted the legibility of their works' forms, slowing the audience's process of perception and apprehension by drawing on impersonal, deeply material dimensions of human practice, in spite of the human actor present. Employing different techniques to harness unintended, spontaneous, or habitual movements and gestures, they used bodies as part of an expressive artistic medium, like paint or clay, rather than simply as symbols for modern consumer, industrial, or administrative life. Though the body as a material had less distance from real human practice than paint, charcoal, metal, or clay—and thus a literalness that made its inclusion within the frame, on one level,

a fairly simple move rhetorically, as Greenberg felt—Rainer, Schneemann, and Acconci also found ways to make it yield the “aesthetic surprise” or something “else” that a clever idea alone does not convey. Though it was not these artists’ intention to please Greenberg, their work invites us to argue against his, and others’, conclusions using some of his own criteria. In their work, the physicality of the ordinary body becomes a source of the sort of texture and unfamiliar form necessary for art to fulfill the important critical function Greenberg and Marcuse urged.

Theodor Adorno offers one more helpful understanding of this project when he writes that art must “negate the categorical determinations of the empirical world” and at the same time “harbor what is empirically existing in its own substance.”¹⁷ It is the ways in which the ordinary human body, when made the material for a brief period in the 1960s, negated categories and at the same time harbored the effects of those cultural constructions “in its own substance”—the ways it maintained modernism’s critical performance of vulnerability—that is the subject of this book.

Many artists participated in this conversation, of course, but Rainer, Schneemann, and Acconci each, in their early work, built upon this history with the most compelling struggle between the subtly familiar emotions conveyed by the ordinary and the uncertain forms of abstraction.¹⁸ All three were born between 1934 and 1940, and educated in modernist methods. Rainer studied with Martha Graham and Merce Cunningham; Schneemann had an MFA in painting and held Cézanne and Chaim Soutine as key reference points; Acconci earned an MFA in fiction writing and had a deep investment in the concrete approach to experimental poetry after Ezra Pound. At the same time, each produced work that encompassed and influenced the concerns of a key 1960s artistic movement from a position both inside and outside of it—happenings for Schneemann, minimalism for Rainer, and conceptual art for Acconci.

New York City was special for the central role that performance played in its shifts in artistic thought. The city could rightfully claim to have been the beating heart for the “American ‘style’ par excellence” associated by 1951 with the paintings of Pollock and Willem de Kooning and promoted in state-funded exhibitions in Europe and Japan as part of the operations of postwar American empire building.¹⁹ Fueled by this global profile, New York’s art world of galleries, museums, and critics had nurtured the method in which material accident was understood to play a key expressive role, attracting younger artists conversant in painterly aesthetics. (Some, like Al Held—Rainer’s boyfriend in the late 1950s—would keep painting; others, like Schneemann, began to invest in other media.) New York had also been the center of American modern dance for decades. Martha Graham’s school and company were established in 1926 and grew steadily from that point.²⁰ Under Graham’s influence, New York cultivated a style of modern dance—also promoted during the Cold War in Asia—that emphasized impersonal, abstract shapes, derived from the organic architecture and movements of the body and then exaggerated to form a highly technical physical language, challenging both to execute and to interpret.²¹

Because works in these modernist modes were what continued to sell in theaters and galleries, New York was a place where art-making went forward in a way that was deeply aware of recent art history. The need felt by the next generation to negate the modernist object and modernist dance and open up a language less reduced and exclusive (and less burdened by Cold War politics) was strong in New York—thus the near obsessive attachment to the ordinary. But so, for many, was the sensibility that knew compellingly complex abstract forms when it saw them, and had been trained to judge works of art on the basis of their capacity to body forth concrete subtleties in a sufficiently sensitive way. I do not want to overstate a causal relationship by saying that the orientation toward physical abstraction in the worlds of both painting and dance in New York was what made experimental performance flourish there in the early 1960s. I do believe, however, that seeing what the two kinds of physicality—painterly and bodily—have in common will allow us to understand the stakes of the literal presentation of the living body in performance artworks. These were as high as for the previous generation of art viewers, who understood painting's physicality and dance's impersonal abstractions to have been mobilized to preserve and to cultivate human-sensuous activity and understanding. "Whether . . . to learn to dance by practicing dancing or to learn to live by practicing living, the principles are the same," Martha Graham wrote in 1952; dance as she understood it had always been "the symbol for the performance of living."²²

Rainer and Schneemann, as new transplants to New York and active members of the vibrant downtown scene, were at the forefront of the art world's shift away from traditional painting and sculpture. They regularly contributed to and performed in experimental works in the many small concerts that were held on a weekly basis in lofts and galleries and at the Judson Memorial Church at the start of the decade.²³ Rainer developed her casual but deliberate dance aesthetic in direct dialogue with and as an alternative to paintings and sculptures by Held, Robert Rauschenberg, and Robert Morris, while Schneemann (like happenings artists Kaprow, Claes Oldenburg, and Jim Dine) chose to divert her attention in the early 1960s from her own painting practice to the collision of bodies, objects, and substances in performances that she called "concretions."²⁴ The self-conscious displacement of an older model of art was considered far from finished by artists at the end of the decade, and Acconci played a leading role in the conceptual art movement's refusal of visual appeal in favor of rigid and readily apparent structures.²⁵

We hear Rainer negotiating a modernist investment in physical materials with her contemporary embrace of the ordinary in 1966, demanding "a more matter-of-fact, more concrete, more banal quality of physical being in performance, . . . [one] in which skill is hard to locate."²⁶ Schneemann hashed out her understanding of the relationship between sensuous material and literal presence in a note from 1962, explaining that "a performance work is an extension of the formal-metaphorical activity possible within a painting or construction," and thus there is no contradiction when thinking from one medium to the other, since they "present equal potentialities for sensate involvement."²⁷ In 1972 Acconci

offered his own concise articulation of the desire for an ever more direct union between representation and material: “I wanted to make words *things* so much.”²⁸

All three artists had internalized the back and forth between immediate physicality on the one hand, and participation in the abstract languages and systems of human communication on the other, as central to a modernist model of art; but they also recognized and asserted this dialectic’s centrality to everyday embodied social life. Each takes as his or her subject the bodily experience of everyday life—that is, the body as it exists always in relation to external structures. Modernist works had evoked the structure of modernity through the grid, the bourgeois portrait, geometry, the repetitive application of paint, or industrial construction techniques, and then disrupted that structure’s coherence with the physical properties of the medium through which it was conveyed. Performance artworks, by contrast, wove tasks, stereotypes, and household objects into a strategy for eliciting or foregrounding performers’ unintended movements.

The following chapters explore Rainer’s simulated routines, Schneemann’s appropriation of Gidgetesque codes for sex, and Acconci’s adaptation to rigid disciplinary programs; but they also attend to the way shoulders slope when a body is leaning against a rail, lips curl when something slimy and cold is applied to bare skin, or eyes twitch and water when trying to look through or past an affront.²⁹ Such factual reminders of a performer’s embodiment become signs within the work for effort and fatigue, for pleasure and pain, for the current of inchoate feeling expressed in a body’s constant generation of small unintended movements, and for the persistence of the desire to connect or communicate when others are present. The audience sees the task, the code, the relentless exercise, but they also see the sensitive physicality on which these structures depend and which inherently has the power to change them. The physicality of the body announces its difference from the structure, but at the same time its particularity only becomes visible through it. The various ways physicality is negotiated, in conflict or merging with its simultaneously constraining and supportive surrounding structure, are offered to the audience as the substance of the work of art. At their best, Rainer, Schneemann, and Acconci offer their viewers an embodied performance, not as a presentation of self, personality, or character, nor simply as symptom, tragedy, or farce, but as a figure for what we might call bodily practice. Everyday cultural constructions (or objects and gestures that stood for such constructions) and physical bodies repeatedly intersect or clash in this work, reshaping each other, and it is in the reshaping rather than any simple mirroring or conformity that the artistic gesture arises. The strange new gestures and movements produced—similar to a drip of paint becoming the contour of a plane, or an unsmoothed seam between two hunks of clay creating a scar on a classical figure’s backside—suggested that structure could take shape in response to matter and the contingency it stood for, rather than simply containing, battling, or disappearing behind it.



In his first two volumes of *The Critique of Everyday Life* (1947 and 1961), Henri Lefebvre articulated the dialectical understanding of everyday embodied social life that we also find in the performance artworks. I turn to this now as a parallel model of critical thought from the period. Not least among the features of Lefebvre's theory that make it relevant to performance art is his emphasis on the body. "The 'human world,' " he writes, "is composed as much of human bodies and their physiological activities as it is of the range of works, products, objects, and goods."³⁰ The process set in motion by bodily need, he explains, should be a rich and satisfying "journey from the vital to the social, from want to fullness, from privation to pleasure," but in consumer society it is "constantly being interrupted or distorted" (2:11). Lefebvre speaks sharply of everyday life as "infinitely poor, bare, alienated," but he is also confident in his aim "to situate the poverty" in relation to the "wealth of this everyday life . . . , which we know we must reveal to itself and transform so that its richness can become actualized and developed in a renewed culture" (1:31, 35).

The New York artists that appear in this book were not reading Lefebvre. His text reveals only a confluence of concerns in the post-World War II period as consumer culture expanded. What Lefebvre brings most helpfully to the discussion is a consideration of "abstraction," a topic that the artists do not write about as directly (2:62). Focusing on the embodied aspects of everyday life, Lefebvre can register the body's vulnerability and passivity—whether to the damaging effects of modernity, or to the collectivizing forms of human activity and forms of thought that are separate from consuming and being consumed (2:27). Embodiment allows him to identify two kinds of form: "the immediate and natural forms of necessity . . . as well as the seeds of the activity by which those forms are controlled (abstraction, reason, linear time)" (2:62). He articulates these two sides, in another passage, as the "unformed" and "forms," adamant that "not for a single moment" can one grasp the everyday without awareness of both, their fundamental differences fully present: "The unformed spills over from forms. It evades them. It blurs the precision of their contours. By marking them with erasures and marginal areas, it makes them inexact. The everyday is 'that,' a something which reveals the inability of forms (individually and as a whole) to grasp content, to integrate it and to exhaust it. It is also content, which can only be seized by analysis, whereas the unformed can only be seized immediately or intuitively by participating in spontaneous activity or by stimulating it" (2:64, 162, 64). Rather than a force of blockage, the unformed for Lefebvre is a richly felt texture that invented and reasoned forms cannot contain, but which gives them their reason for being. The kernel of everyday life is the moment when one realizes "that" at the level of thought, when both kinds of understanding, in their complete and utter difference from but dependence upon one another, are grasped in their relation to content, a third term referring to sharable significance, or whatever one understands some aspect of everyday life to be *about*. The experience of the unformed is real and immediate, but passes quickly; we need the form of analysis to turn it into content, and content by definition always exceeds the form through which we represent it.

Throughout volume 2, Lefebvre reflects on his own method as he understands it at the beginning of the 1960s, demonstrating how he and his associates take everyday life as a model in their efforts to perform an analysis that moves dialectically between positivist observation and conceptual invention. Thus he defends his book's reliance on abstraction, on the turn his text frequently makes to "the plane of the imaginary," which, he acknowledges, "may appear abstract, fictitious and negative" (2:55). Such a turn is necessary, he argues, if the goal is "to delve into the hidden life of visible and tangible human beings"; and he insists that "such an abstraction . . . reaches something which psychological or sociological evidence does not reveal or make immediately apparent" (2:55–56). If we view these intangibles as equally part of the real, then we realize that "the negative is also positive," and can more fully apprehend content (2:55).

Though Lefebvre met the "perfection" of art only with suspicion, we can recognize the mobilization of abstraction that he describes—a mobilization needed to grasp the full, felt significance of the immediate concrete facts of everyday life—as something that many modernist artists also pursued (2:184). When he writes about "form" and "matter," he could be describing a fundamental modernist approach to form—the underlying principle of a painting by Cézanne or a "tasklike" dance by Rainer, in which the landscape or the choreography serves as the conceptual structure, and bodily or painterly materiality "spills" out of the control of that form, in the process becoming a central part of the work's "content" (figs. 9 and 10). Like the performance artists, Lefebvre carried modernist insights forward to meet an audience more eager to see recognizable things and systems than to grapple with suggestive abstractions. Like Lefebvre, the artists understood the persuasive force of positivist observation, but they also insisted their audiences attend to what was not directly observable but felt.

The first chapter of Judith Butler's *Bodies that Matter* (1993) interrogates the ideological force that the notion of "materiality" carries in Western philosophy "as a sign of irreducibility," and poses a theoretical challenge to the incorporation of physicality that I am arguing Rainer, Schneemann, and Acconci made central to their artistic forms.³¹ If the bodily sign that I am saying the artists offer relies on a notion of materiality as something significantly different from conceptual frameworks or rational infrastructures invented by a particular culture in history, then I risk reproducing the "exclusions" (29) that Butler understands as foundational to Western thought. Such conceptual exclusions have led to real political violence in the world when actual persons come to be identified with the unrepresentable category, and are thereby disenfranchised within discourse. Entire categories of person—"woman" or "lesbian," for example (38, 51)—become unrepresentable within this Western "system" (39), and being unrepresentable for Butler is equivalent to not existing.

The simplest way this book responds to feminist, poststructuralist concerns such as these is by positing the physicality or materiality of the body as inextricably intertwined with cultural codes, located not outside but, as Butler herself suggests, at "the site where

discourse meets its limits, where the opacity of what is not included in a given regime of truth acts as a disruptive site of linguistic impropriety and unrepresentability” (53). Butler’s formulation, in her emphasis on linguistic utterance and her valorization of disruption in itself, differs tellingly from Lefebvre’s similar but more modernist account of the relation between embodiment and abstraction in the everyday. Butler’s first chapter primarily centers around language and text-based understandings of matter and their gendered connotations, making discourse the measure of politics. Lefebvre’s theory, by contrast, makes room for felt or intangible dimensions in our experience of the concrete (our experience of both need and desire, for example), understanding them to be not disruptive, errant, or outside but as much a part of human “form” as language is. In the distinction between form and discourse, a space is opened up for the nonlinguistic, concrete dimensions of art, which, as a product of human invention designed for an audience, does not claim to be situated in some extracultural “outside” realm but at the same time cannot be reduced to verbal concepts. For art, as in everyday life, matter is always immediately at hand, unavoidable, a necessary part of how its shareable form is made. Indeed, not to take the material and the felt into account, for Lefebvre, results in failure in art as much as in the abstractions he analyzes that shape everyday life. If we agree with Butler that power denies this need for reciprocal transformation through a tight “matrix” (28) based on exclusion—as in spectacle, for example—then it seems the last thing we would want to do as critics is reduce our sense of the space of the political to a linguistic, strictly discursive space. The theory of performativity Butler puts forward in *Gender Trouble*—much more oriented toward forms of embodied, everyday signification—appears in this book’s coda to



FIGURE 9
Paul Cézanne, *Mont Sainte-Victoire Seen from Les Lauves*, 1902–6. Oil on canvas, 25 $\frac{1}{8}$ × 32 $\frac{1}{8}$ in. (63.82 × 81.6 cm). Nelson Atkins Museum of Art.

FIGURE 10

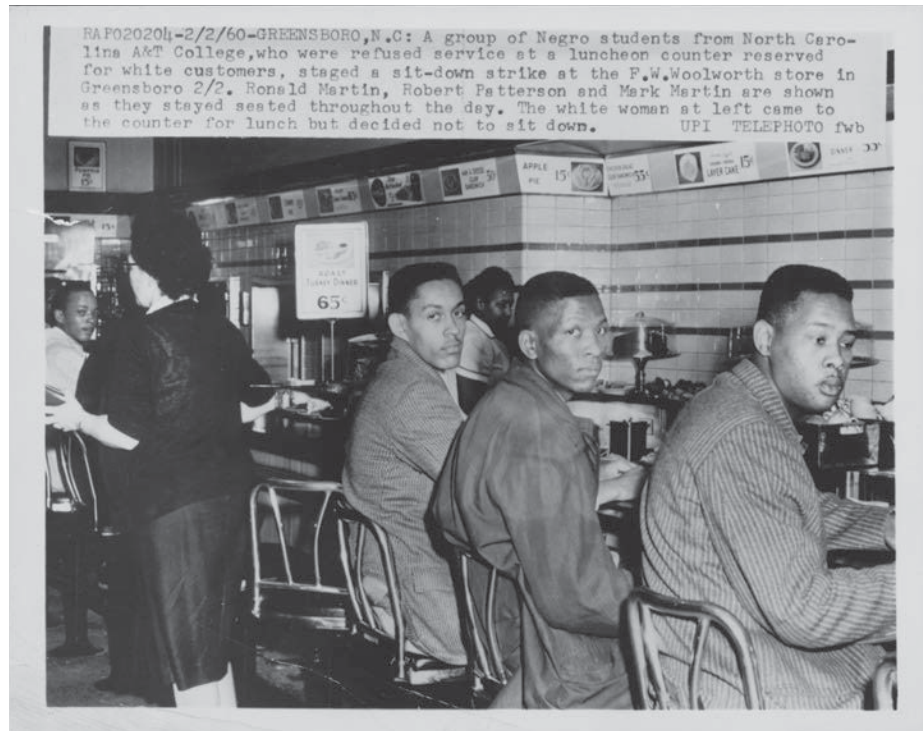
Yvonne Rainer performing *Trio A* at the Portland Center for Visual Art, 1973. Photographer unknown. Yvonne Rainer Papers, Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles.



underscore the ways that particular bodies' failure to perform cultural codes transforms them. Since 2011 Butler has productively taken up the nonverbal dimensions of global protest by groups of people who publicly "expose their vulnerability to failing infrastructural conditions."³² But where Butler emphasizes "resistance" as the galvanizing abstraction to which the concrete body of the twenty-first century gives form, the art and thought of the 1960s leads us back to consider a more entitled, less defensive claim to embodiment.

We too might turn to images of protest as proof of the availability and promise of "embodiment" as an abstraction in the 1960s. In a photograph of a lunch counter sit-in from 1960, three young men—Ronald Martin, Robert Patterson, and Mark Martin—sit in the foreground, as Rosa Parks had done five years earlier on the bus in Montgomery, now at a Woolworth's counter in Greensboro, North Carolina, on the second day of an effort begun by four more students from their school, the Agricultural and Technical College (fig. 11).³³ Much in the picture speaks of the hardship and contradiction that characterized everyday life in the American South of the ugly Jim Crow years: the white woman with her back turned, not joining the protesters at the counter; the black woman working behind the counter, who would not be allowed to serve a member of her own family a slice of the chocolate cake under the glass dome she is paid to clean; the slouch of the three men's shoulders as they wait out the long day without lunch or water. We can feel the weight of their bodies in their seats in our own bodies when we look at the photograph—three kinds of heavy attached to three kinds of jacket, three different haircuts, the

FIGURE 11
 Ronald Martin, Robert Patterson,
 and Mark Martin stage sit-down
 strike after being refused service
 at a F. W. Woolworth luncheon
 counter, Greensboro, NC,
 February 2, 1960. New York World
 Telegraph and Sun Photo
 Collection, US Library of Congress.



differences superficial (but significant) decoration on the essential gesture that unites them and which is meant to unite anyone who looks at them. That gesture of ordinary rest, like Parks's refusal to change seats, is being called on to stand for the larger demands of the civil rights movement. "Bigger than a hamburger," as Ella Baker explained at the founding SNCC conference in 1960, it accuses the existing social order (both its laws and its unwritten conventions) of having come unmoored from the basic facts of embodiment that lie at the root of any ethical social life.³⁴ Here is an opportunity to consider in public what we all understand of embodiment, their protest says; let's start again from here. The sit-ins and marches of the civil rights movement were an important precursor to the artistic deployment of the performative rhetoric of a body within a structure, making it undeniably clear that what happens to a single individual in a public place—and what actions a nearby individual with more power can conceive—indicates the flaws in the entire social structure surrounding both parties.³⁵

Like the student protestors, Rainer, Schneemann, and Acconci provide not only a critique of the structures that constrain embodiment's essential role in the practice of everyday life—what makes the everyday "infinitely poor," for Lefebvre—but also an articulation of the potential for transformation in the relationship between structure and feeling (the source, for Lefebvre, of the everyday's "richness").³⁶ Their work gives its audience a sense of embodied practice that is immediately physical but at the same time

itself becomes an abstraction. It is this second, abstract role that is the main topic of this book: embodiment as a general condition rather than a localized identity—an abstraction, like the everyday for Lefebvre or the human race for SNCC, that is, inextricably rooted in particular experience.³⁷ Near the end of *The Sight of Death* (2006), Clark suggests that artworks may be best suited to answering “ultimate questions”—such as how human beings “see” death—because these questions “admit of an answer only in concrete terms.”³⁸ The concrete body in the works of Rainer, Schneemann, and Acconci offers an answer to the ultimate question of how we stand up to (or sit down within) the abstractions that order modern life. It is a metaphor, like the gesture of the sit-in protesters, for the sensuous human activity that takes place at the meeting point between particular and general, individual and society, material and structure, need and desire. At least since the eighteenth century, modern subjects have had such a notion of sensuous human activity available to them when constructing the basis for a world in which they can thrive.



Entering the world of recent criticism, it can sometimes feel we have stopped locating abstractions such as “everyday embodiment” in past practices. As a result the groundwork of ideas necessary for further construction of workable forms in the present, for ongoing social practice, seems in need of shoring up. One historical account, put forward in the foundational research of Sally Banes and others, views the body’s displacement of traditional artistic materials primarily as a response to power imbalance—an effort to negate the elitism and market-driven baggage attached to high art forms and the museums that housed them.³⁹ Recent art historical analyses of the 1960s, however, suggest that this account fails to capture the undertone of desperation that bodies, as representatives of the real, convey during this period. These bodies lend the artworks a pervasive sense of mediated distance from reality, as Carrie Lambert-Beatty discusses; or of placelessness within history, as Judith Rodenbeck suggests; or of pseudo-Zen submission to the commodity’s logic of ephemerality and unstable value, as described by Alex Potts; or of helplessness in articulating what sort of embodied abstraction might stand up to the grids of urban planning and the unrelenting flow of “goods” within capitalism, in Joshua Shannon’s analysis of Claes Oldenburg.⁴⁰

Kaprow’s happening has been celebrated by many, but most authoritatively by Rodenbeck and Potts, as postmodern, an art form symptomatic of a world ruled by ephemerality and incoherence, and in which fluid social relations are relentlessly reified into systematized, predictable, reproducible ones.⁴¹ In a Kaprow happening, something “vividly concrete” that should have been grasped by its participants, but probably wasn’t, becomes merely a trace in the archive for historians to find and resurrect.⁴² In *The Courtyard* (1962), for example, within a series of various disconnected events in the open square at the center of a large apartment building in Greenwich Village, a young woman in a nightgown carried a transistor radio blaring pop tunes up a ladder to the top of a makeshift paper mountain, where she struck standard “cheesecake” poses for two men

pretending to be photographers (fig. 12).⁴³ As was often the case in Kaprow's happenings, the performers were presented as little more than hollow character types. Susan Sontag referred to them in 1962 as "images of anesthetized persons"; Rodenbeck suggests we think of such figures as part of a syntax of equivalent terms that can include "girls" as easily as "bicycles" or "mops."⁴⁴ The frequency of similar female roles in Kaprow's object-filled scores supports such a reading.⁴⁵ Kaprow reproduces the leveling, meaning-dispersing structures of late modernity and reveals them for what they are, and this is why we value his work now: it performs a critique verging on the satirical, for Rodenbeck, or functions as representational realism, for Potts, allowing us to recognize and affirm postmodern ambiguity.⁴⁶

Rodenbeck is no doubt correct that, whether he intended to or not, Kaprow assailed his audience with grim truths about much contemporary "collective experience."⁴⁷ So too, Potts is likely right that the imaginary memory created by the documentation of a happening redeems "the jumble of contradictory possibilities and constraints and impulses" that it forced its live audience to endure or ignore.⁴⁸ The theoretical tradition of the critique of everyday life, however, suggests that there were worse enemies for Kaprow to attack than avant-garde collectivity, and that the everyday as experienced in the present was not yet so diminished that its best qualities could only be accessed in a retrospective and highly mediated mode.

When Kaprow is the example, arguments for a symptomatic performance of post-modern conditions and their effects make sense; there is little to challenge other than, perhaps, the critic's choice of subject matter. We find no articulation of a grounding abstraction in Kaprow's work. But when similar arguments are made about works less straightforwardly symptomatic than Kaprow's, it seems necessary to offer another point of view. In the following chapters, I will build on recent studies' critical insights—agreeing with the symptomatic interpretation, but not stopping there—to show that in the performance art of Rainer, Schneemann, and Acconci, the emphasis on constraints is best understood to be in dialectical relation with the critical negation of artistic conventions celebrated by Banes and others, rather than in a battle in which the performance of symptom washes out the intention to reverse hierarchy.

Lambert-Beatty, in her important book on Rainer and her context, *Being Watched: Yvonne Rainer and the 1960s* (2008), turns not to Lefebvre's theory but to another key text in the critique of everyday life in the 1960s, Guy Debord's *The Society of the Spectacle* (1967), to support her account of what Rainer makes visible about "the relation between bodies and pictures in a changing culture of mediation."⁴⁹ Since Debord's more aggressive critical stance positions him closer than Lefebvre to the tendency in contemporary art history that I am trying to address and move beyond, Lambert-Beatty's book allows us to reconsider the import of both a key period text and a central 1960s performance artist.

Debord and the Situationists were steeped in Lefebvre's thinking, many of them attending his lectures on sociology in the Paris suburb of Nanterre in 1957–58, or on music at the University of Strasbourg in 1958–59.⁵⁰ Debord and Lefebvre spent time together



FIGURE 12

Allan Kaprow, *The Courtyard*, 1962.
Greenwich Village, New York, 1962.
Photo by Lawrence Shustak. Image
courtesy Margo Shustak.

socially, and Debord contributed a recorded lecture, “Perspectives for Conscious Changes in Everyday Life,” to Lefebvre’s Group for Research on Everyday Life in Paris in May 1961.⁵¹ By 1967, however, the rupture between Lefebvre and the Situationists over what constituted “revolutionary praxis” was complete.⁵² The Situationists saw Lefebvre’s passive analysis of everyday life as opposite to their active creation of “situations.” Recognizing the differences between Lefebvre’s *Critique of Everyday Life* and Debord’s *Society of the Spectacle* helps us to analyze a shift in emphasis from the early to the late 1960s that has had an enormous influence on contemporary thought’s postmodern embrace of critique; but their area of overlap reveals ideas that might still serve us today.

In contrast to Lefebvre’s optimistic, reflective tone, Debord’s language for describing everyday life within capitalism in 1967 is so relentlessly critical and scathing that if the book had a face, it would be sneering with a canine tooth bared. Each short section of the book aggressively points out a new loss or offense. Section 29 is typical:

The origin of the spectacle lies in the world’s loss of unity, and its massive expansion in the modern period demonstrates how total this loss has been: the abstract nature of all individual work, as of production in general, finds perfect expression in the spectacle, whose very manner of being concrete is, precisely, abstraction. The spectacle divides the world into two parts, one of which is held up as a self-representation to the world, and is superior to the world. The spectacle is simply the common language that bridges this division. Spectators are linked only by a one-way relationship to the very center that maintains their isolation from one another. The spectacle thus unites what is separate, but it unites it only in its separateness.⁵³

Debord makes it clear above all that the spectacle is an organ of separation. It is an abstract language, largely visual but not necessarily so, that has achieved concrete form through commodities and the apparatus of advertising and entertainment and “media” that spins around them.⁵⁴ Note his metaphor of the wheel: the spectacle sits at the hub of a society of disconnected individuals, transmitting to them a view of a divided world—real versus represented—that they cannot modify; nor should they want to, as the representation seems to emanate directly from the real and to surpass it in quality. Posing as the only means of connection between the different points on the wheel, the spectacle promotes and maintains separation between human beings and thereby denies their basic need for sociality. As for Lefebvre’s, need is central to Debord’s critical thought. To distract its participants from knowing their real needs, Debord writes, the spectacle manufactures “pseudo-needs,” “all of which come down in the end to just one, namely, the pseudo-need for the reign of an autonomous economy to continue.” He also laments the constructedness of the society of the spectacle, where “man is more and more, and ever more powerfully, the producer of every detail of his world.” Alluding to a historically unspecified but prior, more passive mode of being in the world, he continues, “The closer his life comes to being his own creation, the more drastically is he cut off from that life.”⁵⁵

Following on Jonathan Crary's and Branden Joseph's earlier turns to Debord, Lambert-Beatty takes Debord to be describing something real about social and economic conditions in the 1960s, and like Crary and Joseph, she sympathizes with the negative thrust of his critique.⁵⁶ She uses this understanding to push back against the prevailing account of 1960s experimental dance developed by Banes, who framed it as modeling a new "democracy" consistent with the ambitions of the period's social movements.⁵⁷ "If [the Judson Dance Theater's] aesthetic project is to be written into social histories of the period," Lambert-Beatty writes, "it must be as an engagement with spectacular visibility as well as a battle for democratic ethics," since Rainer's dances "upset the fiction that performances offer access to the events they represent."⁵⁸ She sees Rainer's work as being about the growing distance between the physical bodies viewing pictures and the world that pictures claim to convey. Thus, unlike Banes, Crary, or Joseph, Lambert-Beatty's goal is not to champion her artistic examples as retort to spectacle but to "clear the ground for a different sort of story: one about the difficulty, rather than the achievement of oppositional culture; about the problems that faced so-called postmodern dance when it encountered the features of a postmodern order; and about how Rainer's treatment of spectatorship worked through those questions" (131). Rainer's performance practice "worked through" questions of spectacle by resembling the forms and structures of life in spectacle culture (which I will discuss further in chapter 1). For Lambert-Beatty, this entailed offering a live dance that was becoming more and more like a photographic image (157–58). Rainer subtly cited other dances from the past in her work—"The felt body of the dancer is both intensely present in *Trio A* and already a trace" (158), Lambert-Beatty writes, for example—resulting in artworks that are "engaging social and political realities, though usually on a level other than conscious intention" (261), and thereby reveal the problems in modernity—the struggles, defenses, and survival strategies that people engage in as a consequence of its damage—symptomatically.

Lambert-Beatty suggests that this performance of historically significant symptoms (and she analyzes many more mimetic artworks in the book) is the reason to value Rainer's works in the present. They allow us to look back at people in the past and, empathetically, to "feel for them" (267). Lambert-Beatty does not explicitly state the politics of such a practice for the present, but presumably such historical empathizing will show us what from the past still causes suffering in the present, and what we might work to heal or change at some later, less overwhelmed and more active stage in our recovery. Rainer's works in *Being Watched* ultimately represent something true about how late moderns live with compromise and contradiction, feeling the damage but unable to do anything about it.⁵⁹ I agree with Lambert-Beatty that one can see the effects of spectacle culture given form in the performance artworks of Rainer (and Schneemann and Acconci), and therefore the ways the art represents an important historical struggle, but I do not read the predominant tone of the artworks to be resigned and melancholy compromise, as if choosing to tread water, alienated, in what Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick has called "self-reinforcing because self-defeating strategies for forestalling pain."⁶⁰

The aggressiveness of Debord's critique and the Situationists' rejection of most art as just another form of spectacle encourage an emphasis on symptomatic performance in contemporary analyses of the art of the 1960s. But if we read Debord through the lens of the artworks discussed in this book, beyond a vigilant critique of power, we can see a dialectical modernism grounded in a concrete desire for social practice, similar to what we find in Lefebvre and in Clark. Though Debord's critique is sharp, it is important to understand that the Situationists pursued the resistance to spectacle with confidence.⁶¹ If we understand the notion of spectacle as a tool rather than as a fixed category for quickly wielding bleak diagnoses (a tendency Clark suggests was already plaguing "academic Marxism" in 1984), then we start to see it less as an exhaustive, negative summation of every aspect of life in consumer culture than as a "weapon of combat."⁶² Debord's ruthless description of spectacle was a means for calling to mind—and calling his readers to defend and maintain—unspectacular forms of social life, which is to say, everything that was not an infra-thin abstraction hovering distractingly above or outside (or even mingling within) the concrete bodily realms of need and desire.

Debord's sense of social practice bolsters nearly every section of *The Society of the Spectacle*. Within each damning passage appear phrases that evoke the world on behalf of which the notion of spectacle was called to serve as a weapon—the sort of everyday practices and states that it still seemed possible in 1967 to preserve (marked here with my italics and page numbers from the text):

All that once was directly lived has become mere representation. (12)

All contact between people now depends on the intervention of such "instant" communication. (19)

[Spectacle] is the opposite of *dialogue*. (17)

The suppression of any *qualitative dimension*. (110)

Lived reality suffers the material assaults of the spectacle's mechanisms of contemplation, incorporating the spectacular order and lending that order *positive support*. (14)

Asserts that all *human life*, which is to say all *social life*, is mere appearance. (14)

An obvious downgrading of *being* into having. (16)

It is only inasmuch as *individual reality* is not that it is allowed to appear. (16)

The list develops throughout the book. Debord further evokes as lost "the special place once occupied by touch," "what society can deliver," "what is possible," "any comprehensive view of the job done," "direct personal communication between producers," "consistency and communication," "that fundamental area of experience which was associated in earlier societies with an individual's principal work," "real activity," "needs," "his own existence and his own desires," "the very powers that have been snatched from us," "everything that in human activity exists in a fluid state," and "the concerted action of the forces of production" (17, 20, 21, 23, 26, 29). I am suggesting that we read each statement not as conclusive, but rather as an announcement of an offense that presumes a listener who

will hear the wrong that it describes and take action on behalf of “all that was once directly lived” (12). There are, in fact, a few sections in *The Society of the Spectacle* where Debord claims the persistent existence of the reality threatened by spectacle in no uncertain terms: “Social practice, which spectacle’s autonomy challenges, is also the real totality to which the spectacle is subordinate. So deep is the rift in this totality, however, that the spectacle is able to emerge as its apparent goal” (13). Here Debord states the superiority of “social practice” to spectacle as a given fact. Even more confidently, in the section that concludes his chapter on the commodity, Debord states plainly the goals for his project of revolutionary transformation of everyday life: “Consciousness of desire and the desire for consciousness together and indissolubly constitute that project which in its negative form has as its goal the abolition of classes and the direct possession by the workers of every aspect of their activity. The opposite of this project is the society of the spectacle, where the commodity contemplates itself in a world of its own making” (34).

The notion of a fluid, active, conscious life of desire, dialogue, contact, communication, and work undergirds Debord’s critique in *The Society of the Spectacle*. It motivates and strengthens it. The critique could not exist without it. If the ideals evoked negatively in each paragraph seem vague, unlocated in any real past or certain future, that is because social practice was, for Debord’s generation of critics, an abstraction inherited from modernism. It contains the newest and most fearsome idea from the modern era: that there is no god, no divine right, no natural hierarchy or path—just practice, just the project that ensues from the desire for consciousness and the consciousness of others’ desires. Such a practice entails meeting needs and having relationships and making sense of what is experienced passively and deciding what action to take, and having feelings about all of this that are then poured into conceptual frameworks, where they must constantly be negotiated in hopes of arriving at a sense of what is true or right that could be shared and perhaps passed on. Nothing in this practice was strictly practical, but none of it happened outside of conditions that human beings did not create either. It was real in the sense that, in the above quotations, “real activity” was real, or “dialogue,” or “contact,” or “touch”—undeniably present in the concrete world, but not observable or available to “downgrading . . . into having” in any strict positivist sense (16). In the long quotation from section 29 above, Debord describes spectacle as a powerful “abstraction,” but what he referred to as “social practice” and “life”—what Lefebvre called “the everyday”—was for the critics of everyday life the stronger counterabstraction. The spectacle was derived from the real, but so was the everyday. It was an abstraction grounded in the particular, a notion of “sensuous human activity,” as Marx understood it, derived from bodily human need rather than needs defined by whatever image happened to be at the center of the wheel.⁶³

Lefebvre, Debord, and the Situationists rejected art. Rainer, Schneemann, and Acconci, operating under different principles, risked visual-sensuous form. They put a frame around particular bodies, not in order to construct a perfect world as screen against a flawed one but in order to say something about embodied practice in general and, in

that, promote a form of concrete counterabstraction. Their artworks share Debord's criticisms, pointing to what was wrong with everyday life in late modernity with a performance of symptoms as desperate as Debord's sneering critique, but we need also to see the ways in which, like Debord, they call to mind and mobilize aspects of human being that are not spectacularized through participation in the logic of the commodity and consumption.

Rainer presents not only a line of bored workers but also, by emphasizing the thumbprint-like particularity of the way a body relents to gravity, invites a look normally reserved for our more intimate everyday relations. Schneemann not only mimicks the alienating seductions of advertising but in the next moment presents a genderless pile of heavy limbs that gives form to something true about what navigating one's embodiment from within the thrill and urgency of erotic desire is often like. Acconci appears not only as Michel Foucault's disciplined subject but also as a recurring figure in a series of episodes that place rude, slobbery impulses and reflexes in one installment next to the dogged pursuit of his viewer in the street or through the mail in the next, reminding us that desire is embodied and therefore as dependable a motivation for action as self-preservation.

In other words, to align performance art in New York with the critique of everyday life in the 1960s is to deploy a critical method in the present that listens not only to expressions of pain provoked by consumer capitalism's traumatizing conditions but also to what was achieved in the embodied, thoughtful struggle with those conditions.⁶⁴ The most useful knowledge about history may lie in the forms such struggles produce. We are responsible as critics and historians for witnessing past pain and outrage. The great era of performance art in the 1970s that followed the work discussed in this book made that responsibility a priority. Artists in the United States such as the collective ASCO, Nancy Buchanan, Sherman Fleming, David Hammons, Suzanne Lacy, Senga Nengudi, Richard Newton, Martha Rosler, Schneemann in her more rhetorically feminist work, Barbara T. Smith, Hannah Wilke, and many others dealt explicitly with the performance of identity categories in work intended to address questions of historical visibility and social injustice as they applied to bodies legible culturally as black, female, Chicano, or queer. A modernist emphasis on physical material did not disappear in these works—Nengudi (fig. 13), Fleming, and Schneemann, in particular, continued to make use of materials (animate and inanimate) in rich and suggestive ways—but for most of the other artists above, the body as a source of accidental form became less prominent as its capacity to stand for a specific historical narrative capable of disrupting the homogeneous narrative of white American culture became the greater priority.

The generality of the concepts of embodiment and humanity that Rainer, Schneemann, and Acconci were still operating with in the 1960s may seem strange to us now. Who today, with an awareness of feminism and the interrogation of identity and power that it engendered, can speak of "the body" in general terms rather than as this

FIGURE 13

Senga Nengudi, *Performance Piece*, 1978. Pearl C. Woods Gallery, Los Angeles, 1978. Performer: Maren Hassinger. Photo by Harmon Outlaw.



or that specifically categorized body? This book proposes that there is something to be relearned from these moments of simplification, something about how a more broadly embracing, collectivizing notion of the human was imagined during the transition to what we now call late modernity. However uncomfortable we might be in the present with the notion of universal address, it is historically accurate to view these artists' early works as reaching for an understanding of embodiment that could not be reduced to or claimed by a single identity category. As part of their claim to a general humanity, Rainer's, Schneemann's, and Acconci's performances do not ask the body to stand and fight on one side of an embattled binary: body versus mind, material versus concept, female versus male, black versus white, and so on.⁶⁵ Though they each mobilize such dichotomies in the complex language of gesture and physicality that they offer, their politics are not so much about transgression against oppressive norms as about showing the ways culture and physicality are intertwined and in constant negotiation for everyone.⁶⁶

It is my hope in writing this book that we have entered a critical moment when we want more for the people of the past and of our own period of history than only to have the pain resulting from capitalism's exploitative structures heard and recognized. Such recognition and hearing are necessary for any end to the wounding of embodied life by the logic of the commodity to begin, likewise for any process of recovery from the wounds already inflicted, and they will be urgently demanded until satisfactorily supplied. Let us also be attentive to what happens next in such a process. When people trust that the failure of existing structures to accommodate their embodied needs and desires will not only be acknowledged but serve as the motivation for broader structural transformation carried out by a public that includes themselves—what do they then build? Art has the capacity to be one source, however metaphorical, for such assurance.



One last note on this book's reliance on photography. Photography relies on mechanical and chemical means to convey its views of the world, and this distancing relationship to embodied experience must be considered in any critique of the economy and culture surrounding spectacle. Yet when considering performance art's relation to photographic media, a more productive starting place than the technological aspect of photographic mediation is the way photography serves to extend and communicate sensuous understanding between people. Photography in this book is thus not conceived as a "supplement," another term in the "chain" of representations mobilized in a process of "endless deferral" of the real, as it is in Amelia Jones's postmodern analyses.⁶⁷ Rather, it is seen to traffic in a "carnal medium," as suggested by Roland Barthes's later model, providing some strange, inadequate, but compelling access to bodies in the world in history within its frames.⁶⁸ Photographs are treated as documents here—mined for all of the nuance from which "a medium prone to chance" produces meaning, as Robin Kelsey writes—but also as "analogies" for what they represent, as Kaja Silverman discusses, neither subordinate nor simply transparent to past events.⁶⁹ A photograph is a real object, but at the same time an abstraction, participating in the construction of "the real." In other words, like modernist art, photography partakes of the particularity of the world's objects and categories ("it harbors what is empirically existing in its own substance"), and at its best, answers ultimate questions concretely enough to draw from its viewers new words for the felt content of their lives.⁷⁰

When Rainer wrote famously in 1968 that her body "remains the enduring reality" in the face of the televised war in Vietnam, she meant to emphasize its persistent, nonconceptual, nonabstract facticity and its inseparability from the destructive cultural enterprises surrounding it, such as the war.⁷¹ The body may have been rendered more ambiguous by television, as Lambert-Beatty suggests—"both more real (brought home) and less real (interrupted for commercial)"⁷²—but it would be wrong to infer from this that embodied understanding has been reduced to a melancholic remembrance in Rainer's work, already defeated by spectacular framing. Embodiment communicates across photography's layers of mediation, and it is what allows viewers of photography to accurately comprehend the political stakes of what they see there. It is this sense of embodiment that still comes through in the works of art discussed in this book, which we now rely on photographs to access. Both technological, cultural frame and that which sensitively relays the details of flesh and gesture across series of moments in time, photography's form is intertwined with and essential to performance art's ongoing life as art.

This book's analysis relies on various forms of documentation—photography, film, video, live reenactment, and written description—and while I have never seen some images in the following pages published, many are reproduced in a nearly identical manner to the way I originally experienced them in books and magazines. The array of documents testifies to the fact that the concrete body had a concreteness that translates across media, as Rebecca Schneider has suggested, which is to say that as viewers of performance

from afar, we take what we can get, and the body as a material supports our doing so, in a way that painting's and sculpture's physicality also supports.⁷³ As most studies of performance art already emphasize, the limitations of any medium of documentation must be acknowledged, but it would be unnecessarily tragic to repress the desire to enter into the circle of aesthetic experience around the past live performance that each document helps to draw. If an image gives us a form that we recognize to be artfully intended—if it opens up “material reality . . . for our critical perception,” as Susan Buck-Morss understands the aesthetic—then we do best to trust that we are accessing the art, and to grapple with and reflect on what we see and feel from there.⁷⁴

1 Hurray for People

Yvonne Rainer

In the context of an everyday world in which gunslingers traveling the road west fit between commercial breaks as easily as the live feed of a Vietcong prisoner's execution, Yvonne Rainer wrote a program statement that cast her work in 1968 as a retort to the desensitization to violence that television urged and normalized.¹ She expressed her "horror . . . at the fact that the T.V. can be shut off afterwards as after a bad western," concluding with more than a little desperation, "My body remains the enduring reality."² Turning to what she called "unenhanced physicality" as the subject and material for her work, Rainer made understated, shuffling, experimental dances that put the physical body's mundane vulnerability quietly on display, as if reminding her viewers of the basic components of ordinary embodied empathy. Why, though, Rainer's work has left many asking, did the performing body have to appear so introverted—cool to the point of impersonality—to reveal its physicality? Rainer's performers have been called "neutral" and "impassive." "It's like she doesn't even care if we're here," said one of my students in 2006, watching Robert Alexander's 1978 film of Rainer dancing *Trio A* (1966). Her inward gaze and drooping extremities suggest that the dancer has already fallen victim to modernity's numbing effects, or, at best, retreated of her own volition in defense. Rainer's pursuit of ordinary embodiment, to be sure, participated in the emerging antiexpressionist conception of art pioneered by John Cage and Anna Halprin. Simultaneously negative strategy and symptom, her dancers' deadpan faces invoke Cage's leveling inclusivity, and as such could be read as simply a sign for the urban blasé attitude Georg Simmel identified back in 1903—a good performance, an accurate representation of everydayness, revealing the damage or illness brought on by the logic of the commodity form.

Whether the connotations of damage in Rainer's performance works overwhelmed the everyday physicality that she intended as compensatory is one important measure by which to judge her work's success or failure. This chapter will track the results of the decisions she made in pursuit of her aesthetic goals, demonstrating that the introspective posture Rainer deployed in what she called "tasklike" or "pedestrian" movement served to avoid easily legible gesture and facial expression so that a more generalized, abstracted physicality could come forward.³ Ultimately Rainer's work overcomes the mere performance of symptom: at the same time that an impersonal presentation registers as

modernity's ordinary, it also tips the body over into mere physicality—the body as mute object in space, subject to gravity—allowing Rainer to hold onto an older modernist model in which art's difference and separateness from the formed matter and systematized languages of the everyday world are precisely the source of its truth.

The theoretical framework underpinning this argument finds support in Theodor Adorno's *Aesthetic Theory*. For Adorno, the “expressed meaning” in a work of art is located in its “sedimented” and “meaningless” aspects.⁴ In art, “expression is the antithesis of expressing something,” a product of what Adorno calls “natural history,” an “imitation of an objective expression, remote from psychology, of which the sensorium was once conscious in the world and which now subsists only in artworks.” Adorno's formulations are useful because they do not oversimplify the complex balance between similarity and difference in art's relation to the world, a balance that allows it to perform a crucial social function. My understanding of what he is saying is basically this: art is parallel to the world, but other than it. Like the world, it is concrete and full of contradictions between whole and part, general and particular, between those aspects determined by a society, those determined by an individual, and those that neither society nor individual had any role in creating. But it incorporates the contradictions of the world in such a way that we are never confused as to which is the world and which the art. This separateness, or autonomy, is necessary for Adorno because “by virtue of its rejection of the empirical world—a rejection that inheres in art's concept and thus is no mere *escape*, but a law immanent to it—art sanctions the primacy of reality.”⁵ Art must be separate from life to honor the fact that life is always—or should be always—better. Along similar lines, Adorno writes, “The bourgeois want art voluptuous and life ascetic: the reverse would be better.”

THE TASKLIKE AESTHETIC

Rainer developed the tasklike style in the late 1960s in *Trio A*, a four-and-a-half-minute dance for three people, though it had appeared in embryo in sections of her 1963 work *Terrain*. This style featured prominently in many if not all of the dances she made subsequent to *Trio A*, including *The Mind Is a Muscle* (1968), *Northeast Passing* (1968), *Rose Fractions* (1969), *Performance Fractions for the West Coast* (1969), *Continuous Project—Altered Daily* (1969), *Chair-Pillow* (1969), *WAR* (1970), *Trio A with Flags* (1970), and the series of dances she has made since 2000.

Photography, in spite of its reductive stillness, allows us to begin to understand the tasklike aesthetic's basic qualities. One photograph of *Northeast Passing*—a group work that Rainer choreographed for thirty students while in residence at Goddard College in Plainfield, Vermont—moves in unusually close (fig. 14). In this photograph, published with an interview of Rainer in *Avalanche* magazine in 1972, we see a group of bodies lying on their sides, bent slightly at the waist so that their heads and feet are closer to the camera than their hips. They fit together on the floor like interlocking boomerangs. We can readily



FIGURE 14

Yvonne Rainer, *Northeast Passing*, 1968. Goddard College, Plainfield, Vt., 1968. Photo by Barry Goldensohn. Yvonne Rainer Papers, Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles.

discern three female heads, a lot of dark clothing, and four sets of feet. Two women wear dark pants and unmatching striped T-shirts; the third's clothing registers only as a dark void surrounding her floating face. Their hair is loose. One woman's hair obscures her eyes and mouth, suggesting that she is in motion, perhaps rolling. None of the performers looks at the camera; their gazes turn vaguely inward. One woman's mouth falls slightly open, as though she is not thinking about or controlling her facial expression. The two in stripes both lie with right elbows bent and fingers against the floor, as if about to push themselves up to a seated position. Or perhaps they have just lowered themselves down.

Looking at the image quickly becomes a game of finding differences between the bodies. Where the first woman's right fingers are flexed, those of the second are extended along the floor. The first woman's left forearm remains horizontal on the floor, whereas the second woman's left forearm is raised vertically, so that her hand falls away limply from a bent wrist, like a periscope. The limp-wristed gesture might seem coded in another context, but popped up in the middle of so much giving-in-to-gravity, it does not. The animation and separateness of this hand draws the eye back to the first woman's left hand, to find, not a lost gesture, but a shadowed, cup-like position that we could not even call a

gesture at all. It seems, rather, an instance of the body in its default mode. The hand, like most of the rest of the human body, automatically softens and slightly recoils when it is not being willfully extended. The softness of these bodies' comportment makes them far more banal—and therefore vulnerable—than the bodies usually seen in the performing arts, taut with outward expressiveness. But despite their vulnerability, the inwardly turned gazes of these performers do not acknowledge the viewers to whom they are so exposed.

One consistently finds this inwardly oriented, nonfrontal gaze in photos of Rainer's work from the late 1960s. Look at an image of *Trio A* from its first performance run in 1966 (fig. 15). Reading from right to left, Rainer slouches wearily upstage, David Gordon balances on one leg, and Steve Paxton expands arms and legs outward like a scarecrow. Meanwhile they look up at the ceiling, down at the floor, and off into the corner—anywhere, it seems, but at the audience seated on the floor and leaning against the wall on the other side of the room. With their averted gazes, the people in both photographs seem reluctant to admit that the audience has a needed role, doubtful that, should they look out at it, they will find it truly receptive to what they offer. Their posture is one of defensive exposure: a presentation of embodied selfhood familiar both to the audience and, we imagine, to them, but offered with no apparent expectation of increased intimacy between the two.

Alexander's film of Rainer dancing *Trio A*, available on YouTube (fig. 16), demonstrates that there are virtually no pauses between movements in this dance. There is no narrative, no development in its four and a half minutes. The dancer proceeds without



FIGURE 15
Peter Moore, performance view
of Yvonne Rainer's *The Mind is a
Muscle, Part I or Trio A*, 1966.
Judson Memorial Church, New
York, 10 January 1966. Pictured:
Steve Paxton, David Gordon,
Yvonne Rainer.

FIGURE 16

Yvonne Rainer, *Trio A (The Mind Is a Muscle, Part I)*, 1966, performed 14 August 1978. Film by Robert Alexander, 16 mm. Photo of still video frame by Elise Archias.



interruption, without sound. “Funky but determined clockwork,” Carrie Lambert-Beatty has called it.⁶ But clocks repeat, and Lambert-Beatty would be the first to point out that the longer we watch *Trio A*, the more we realize that none of its movements recur. They are all different, and their differences do not produce any drama; they accumulate. Any time I start trying to describe *Trio A*, I find myself thinking about doing it, even though I have never been properly taught the dance beyond the first few steps. The words that come to mind are little instructions to myself or to the dancer. Flap. Flap. Flap. Flap. Flap your arms, hand circles to the corner. Tap your foot around, looking up at the ceiling. Don’t fall down while you wobble to the ground. Kick a foot out, stand up, forward flap, then /CHUG/ stop. Keep going.

In the essay Rainer wrote in 1966 explaining the “tasklike activity” in *Trio A*, we learn that the dancer was to execute the choreography much as one would “get out of a chair, reach for a high shelf, or walk downstairs when one is not in a hurry.” Task movements were not necessarily in imitation of such everyday activities, “but,” she wrote, “in their manner of execution they have the factual quality of such actions.”⁷ On initial encounter with the piece, we have to agree with the artist’s account—there is something distinctly ordinary about the purposeful way she moves, even if none of her gestures is recognizably functional or legibly expressive. Dance has become like work in *Trio A*, an abstracted version of labor. *Trio A*’s dancers—whether Rainer, her original pair of male partners, or any of the countless number of people who have learned the dance since 1966—carry out the movement with the minimum of energy necessary to position legs and arms or keep their balance, as if conserving their energy for a long day.⁸ The drooping hands, ankles, and

heads—visible among the bodies in the photographs and in the film—show us how much of each body’s weight is being allowed to give in to gravity. The dancers’ minimal “weight effort” could be read as indifference, but as I have suggested, along with that coolness, the body that is not controlling the position of its fingers or the length of its neck seems to have let its guard down.⁹ It appears exposed. Viewers find themselves in a relation to these dancers that they might normally only have with their everyday intimates.

On the one side then, in Rainer’s work from the late 1960s, there is a withdrawal of personality, a refusal to impress or directly engage, and on the other, a soft, somewhat passive and vulnerable physicality. That Rainer’s art—her version of minimalism, as I will discuss further—should combine these different effects in a single performing body is one of its central achievements. Identification and empathy with this body draws one in, and yet it is at the same time strange and challenging enough in its inexpressiveness to raise questions as to what this version of the body is about. To what conditions does it imagine itself to be responding? What model of feeling is its withdrawal proposing? What model of sociality? At stake in Rainer’s style are questions about what art has to communicate to an audience that no longer values “high” art, but does still care about the meaning to be found in sensuous experience in the present. To what extent will art speak in terms that its audience can identify with? To what extent does its language have to be somewhat illegible, or new, in order to make its audience conscious of their capacity for sensuous understanding? What can art communicate about its historical moment by working its empathic identifications back and forth between coded legibility and nonverbal physicality?

PAINTING AS BRIDGE

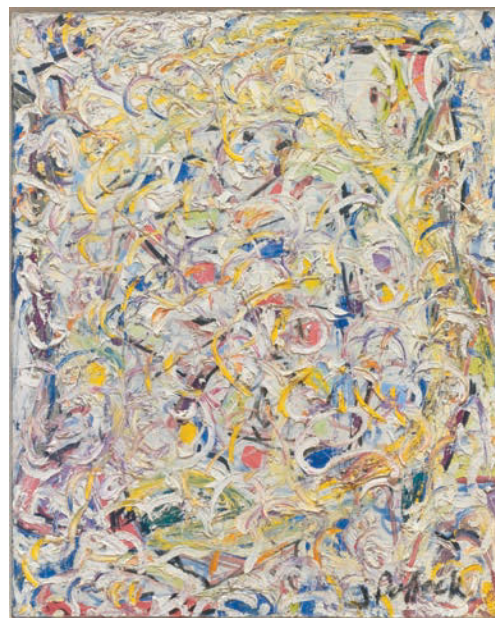
Art history teaches us to understand the moments in the twentieth century when abstraction made the most sense as a search for new symbolic languages. During Russia’s revolutionary turning point circa 1917, to cite one of the discipline’s favorite examples, Kasimir Malevich optimistically sought—in color, geometric shapes, and compositions cut loose from linear perspective’s horizon line—new systems that could give form to new ways of being in or understanding the world. In another such example Jackson Pollock, situated in the post–World War II United States, aimed for newly desublimated incarnations of old and primal ways of grappling with human existence that he believed had been buried by bourgeois tradition.¹⁰ Where Malevich turned to geometry as the means by which the world might be pulled away from recognizability and toward abstraction, Pollock drew upon a model of abstraction rooted in material accident (figs. 17 and 18). In both kinds of abstraction, the viewer is confronted with forms that are not immediately legible. Reading them involves speculation, tapping into basic levels of perception, sensation, and feeling that we bypass when we use language to name and identify. It is these perceptions and feelings, however, that we imagine might have originally motivated language—as witness our impulse to describe Malevich’s and Pollock’s paintings when standing in front of them.

FIGURE 17

Kasimir Malevich, *Suprematist Painting*, 1916–17. Oil on canvas, 38½ × 26⅞ in. (97.8 × 66.4 cm). The Museum of Modern Art. 1935 Acquisition confirmed in 1999 by agreement with the Estate of Kazimir Malevich and made possible with funds from the Mrs. John Hay Whitney Bequest (by exchange).

FIGURE 18

Jackson Pollock, *Shimmering Substance*, 1946. Oil on canvas, 30⅞ × 24¼ in. (76.3 × 61.6 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, Mr. and Mrs. Albert Lewin and Mrs. Sam A. Lewisohn Funds.



The modernist emphasis on medium suggests that the second type of abstraction—that which emerges out of the desire to make form from unformed material—has more to do with art than abstraction that does not rely on material, art being a form of human communication that traffics in concrete signs. Even Malevich's work, for all of the austerity of its geometry, depends as much on texture, substance, and tactility for its effects. The established historical narratives have made clear that observable, sensible physicality was modernism's secular touchstone—the physical world could only be made sense of through an equally physical body.¹¹ However high-flown their ideas became, modernist artists in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries consistently staged them in solid material terms. Alternately fragile and rock-hard, their artworks demanded to be treated with the sensitive, perhaps anxiously grappling attention that viewers normally reserve for objects, environments, and persons they have never experienced before. That Pollock's model gave as much authority to the material and what it happened to do as it gave to the mind directing it might strike us as symptomatic of a desperate need to remind himself and his blasé audience of the loss of sensuous experience brought on by the ever-more-mediated world; but we might also see his emphasis on concrete materiality as uniquely insightful about what the richest moments of knowing anything or anyone are really like.

Rainer was born on November 24, 1934, in San Francisco, to an anarchist-leaning immigrant parents who sent her and her brother to a strict, discipline-oriented home for children for a few years in the late 1930s before finishing raising them in San Francisco among artists and radicals. She attended community college for a year and then spent one week at the University of California, Berkeley, before dropping out and becoming an autodidact. When she arrived in New York in 1956 to be with her boyfriend of the time,

FIGURE 19

Ronald Bladen, *Connie's Painting*, c. 1956–59. Oil on canvas, 38 × 35½ in. (96.5 × 90.2 cm). Courtesy Loretta Howard Gallery, New York.

FIGURE 20

Al Held, *Untitled*, 1950–52. Oil on canvas on board, 57½ × 42¾ in. (146.1 × 108.6 cm). Courtesy of Cheim & Read Gallery.



the painter Al Held, whom she had met in San Francisco, the dialectic between abstraction and concreteness in modernist art was vividly present in the current understanding of painting. Her relationship with Held directly exposed her to the New York school of abstract painting. For three years she lived with Held's paintings and his process of making them in their shared loft apartment. She writes in her 2006 memoir that from Held's conversations with other artists—chief among them George Sugarman and Ronald Bladen (fig. 19)—she “absorbed the hours of talk about ‘space,’ the ‘picture plane,’ ‘flatness,’ ‘the edge,’ ‘figure-ground,’ ‘behind and in front,’ and ‘depth.’ Cubism,” she writes, “was still a key referent.”¹²

Rainer gave one of Held's paintings the private title “Bridge.”¹³ Suggestively structural, the title reflects her awareness of both the technical, compositional terms of painting and their metaphorical resonance for those steeped in painting's language. Held himself used the word *bridge* in a statement from the late 1950s: “The space between the canvas and the spectator is real—emotionally, physically, and logically. It exists as an actual extension of the canvas surface. I would like to use it as such and thus bridge the gulf that separates the painting from the viewer.”¹⁴

The painting that Rainer called “Bridge” was very similar to an untitled work from 1950–52 (fig. 20).¹⁵ This painting is dark, its surface like choppy water broken up by repeated strokes placed at many different angles to the painting's straight edges. Its material presence is overtly mucky, and its dialogue with the structuring support of the canvas fairly straightforward. Dividing the upper and lower halves of the painting, and spanning the space between the left and right edges of the canvas, is a sort of crack or scar, a chain of wispy strokes that are lighter or redder in color than the rest of the picture, providing a

FIGURE 21

Al Held, *Untitled*, 1956. Oil on canvas, 60 × 78 × 3 in. (152.4 × 198.1 × 7.6 cm). Courtesy of Cheim & Read Gallery.



break in the darkness and an ambiguous sense of depth. The “bridge” of strokes seems to function as a horizon line while at the same time sitting thickly on the surface.

From Rainer’s further comments about Held’s paintings in her memoir, we learn that she was as attentive to their materiality as to their structure. She begins one passage with a list of the colors Held was using during those years—red, blue, ocher—evoking a painting such as *Untitled* (1956; fig. 21)—and then writes, “The thickly slathered strokes were applied with spatulas and trowels to unprimed canvas, an abstract expressionist vigor (virility?) and bravado clearly in evidence. I loved those paintings.”¹⁶ She goes on to describe the surprise she felt at her own familiarity with the paintings on a visit to Held’s 1974 retrospective at the Whitney Museum: “I knew every stroke,” she wrote, “like the back of my hand.”

We should take note of the clause in the quotation before last that nods to Held’s status as an Abstract Expressionist. Reflecting the influence of Harold Rosenberg’s theory of action painting, Rainer’s attribution of “vigor” and “bravado” to Held’s painting style rested on a conviction that the artist’s physical body and its activity could be located and experienced through his painterly mark.¹⁷ The tentative parentheses and question mark that set the word *virility* off in Rainer’s description, however, suggest that, for her, the capacity of a stroke of paint to convey something as complexly embodied as someone’s sexual potency could only ever be a matter of personal interpretation.

What is most important to notice in Rainer’s brief account of Held’s painting and what it meant to her is her emphasis on both the materiality and the structure of the paintings as objects, more than her sense, through them, of the action of the artist. The “stroke” for her is as much a physical thing as a sign standing for an activity, and this awareness distinguishes her from fellow performance artist Allan Kaprow—to cite one influential example—who viewed his inheritance of the “legacy” of Abstract Expressionist painting primarily in terms of “the act.”¹⁸

For Rainer in the late 1950s, a stroke of paint had particular physical qualities that mattered and could be read. A painting-as-work-of-art was an opportunity to make such

FIGURE 22

Jackson Pollock, *Autumn Rhythm (Number 30)*, 1950. Enamel on canvas, 105 × 207 in. (266.7 × 525.8 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, George A. Hearn Fund, 1957 (57.92).



bodily encounters with simple concrete materiality over into a public and shareable language. Painting was still modernist, in other words—it still functioned as a metaphor for process, for human engagement with and comprehension of the physical world. Rainer's way of looking at painting positions her much closer to Greenberg than to Kaprow, in spite of the performative dimension she shared with Kaprow. Greenberg's was a name Rainer first came to know during these early years in New York with Held, and his theories best encapsulate the notion of art from the 1950s that is still operative in her work.¹⁹

The understanding of art that Greenberg pitched in 1947 in “The Present Prospects for Painting and Sculpture” was mounted in relation to his understanding of nineteenth-century French painting, to the fundamental “materialism, or positivism” of that foundational moment in the history of modern art.²⁰ As T. J. Clark has discussed, Greenberg was making a case in the 1940s for contemporary “painting as a form of positivism, and modernism as materialist deep down.”²¹ Thus when Pollock is mentioned in the essay as “the most powerful painter in contemporary America,” Greenberg emphasizes the strong presence of paint as a material in his work.²² Referring to no picture in particular, he writes of “the emphatic surfaces of his pictures,” the site of “all that thick, fuliginous flatness which began . . . to be the strong point of late cubism,” and he evokes Pollock's “laying on paint directly from the tube”—all of which is offered as manifestation of the way that “Pollock's art . . . dwells entirely in the lonely jungle of immediate sensations, impulses and notions, therefore is positivist, concrete.” *Shimmering Substance* (see fig. 18), with its pile-up of fat circles, works as an example of the material effect that he is describing.

Fourteen years later, however, in a 1961 article, Greenberg wrote about Pollock's systematicity—his sophisticated knowledge of the conventions of painting. Greenberg's essay was offered as a corrective to the increasingly prevailing understanding of drip paintings such as Pollock's *Autumn Rhythm* (fig. 22) as the product of unbridled automatism, as “over-size doodles,” the traces of “spasmodic feeling.”²³ Greenberg emphasized the structure present in Pollock's work, the technique that governed the spontaneity without ever becoming

rigidly mechanical. What conveyed the work of art's "feeling" for Greenberg was the interplay between the artist's spontaneity and his or her plan. And I want to emphasize here that *feeling* is a word that consistently appears in Greenberg's criticism to name an area of human experience within art's realm of responsibility.²⁴ This type of feeling is not the same as "spasmodic feeling"—a response to the concrete sensible object in front of one, it simultaneously gives way to something more generalizable, not so simply reactive, something more like a feeling of the significance of one's historical moment and the place of one's work within it. The impersonality that Greenberg wanted, the "Apollonian" blandness, was effective when evidently a strategy for managing its opposite, for giving it order, placing it at a distance, but never fully controlling or removing it.²⁵ Pollock's grand "ornamental patterns," his "webs," are successful for Greenberg not because they are self-sufficient but because they "can open and close" unexpectedly to both the material world and the world of resemblance.²⁶ Piecing these two episodes from Greenberg's criticism together, then, allows us to understand the successful work of art, for Greenberg, as being something whose structure contains and manages material incident without suppressing its otherness.

THE ORDEAL OF EXPRESSIVENESS

Rainer brought this understanding of art learned from painting with her as she began to make her own artworks circa 1961. She intended these works to stand pointedly against much in the dominant aesthetic forms in New York and what they had come to stand for in the American art market as it intertwined with global politics, but at the same time they relied for their radicality on an understanding of art as a category that modernism had already made available.²⁷ Her starting point was to deal with period questions about expression. In Rainer's first experiments with dance, we see her most strongly concerned to distance her style of movement from dramatic expression, moving it toward something considered less "high," though for Rainer no less profound. Both Rainer and Sally Banes, her foremost historian, make a stark distinction between her earliest dances and her later style.²⁸ Mapping this early work, however, reveals that aspects of her later tasklike aesthetic were already appearing in her work before 1966.

Rainer's refusal of past dance forms began in this earlier period, for example. She worked against the spectacular, virtuosic performances of both traditional ballet and modern dance from almost the beginning. From September 1959 until June 1960 she studied modern dance intensely at Martha Graham's school, taking two classes per day, Monday through Friday; but well before 1966 she had rejected Graham's mythic narratives of agonized transformation, conveyed through intense, muscular choreography—a "building of phrase on phrase" that *New York Times* dance critic John Martin described admiringly in 1958 as "labored and inhibiting, so that the formal solutions, like the psychological ones, are won only through muscle and passion."²⁹ Graham's performing persona was the opposite of neutral, communicating emotional states both through hieratic shapes with archaic symbolism and

FIGURE 23

Martha Graham teaching at Connecticut College, 1960s. Photographer unknown. Jerome Robbins Dance Division, The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations.



through the dancer's individual effort.³⁰ Her primitivist faith in essential forms and the austere form of expressionism that this faith produced, often understood as the Euro-American response to "machine culture" and world war, stood at a far remove from Rainer's generation, born into the war and inclined to keep pain to themselves.³¹ Passionate feeling had become fully the purview of advertising's madmen by 1960. No sooner expressed than a product was supplied to remedy it, feeling had no choice but to retreat.³² Born in 1894, Graham stands for aspects of modernism that this generation ultimately did not carry forward in its model of art. Rainer's first dances reflect her reckoning with what she had learned from Graham, while at the same time she began to incorporate a sense of the everyday derived from the work and teaching of Merce Cunningham, with whom Rainer began taking classes in 1960.³³

Rainer was initially drawn to Graham in 1959 as a powerful and influential woman (unusually so for her time) and because of her history as a radical artistic force and the rigorous discipline of her technique.³⁴ Via an early approach to choreography that embraced modernist impersonality, Graham theorized dancing during the 1950s as the externalization of inner passions and pain.³⁵ At certain points in the creative process, the body had to be thought of purely as a tool. In 1950 she said, "My technique is an attempt to prepare the body by formal and impersonal means to become a dancer's instrument, strong, subtle, fully conscious, free as only discipline can make it. As it is an instrument with which to express the great truths of life, it must be prepared for the ordeal of expressiveness."³⁶ Dance training, then, consisted of disciplinary structures into which the body was inserted in order to transform it into a structure capable of containing, undergoing, the performative externalization of the emotions (fig. 23). If the body was a material for Graham, it

was one whose impersonality separated it from significant human feeling. Any hope for meaningful bodily communication lay in linking the body to conscious emotional life, and art allowed it to take on that ordeal. Rainer would eventually differ from her on this point, creating dances that foregrounded physicality for itself, presenting a body that seemed uninflected by any readily identifiable emotional state.

Many of the exercises taught at the Graham School were, of course, impersonal calisthenics, with no other purpose than to strengthen the physical architecture of the body. A film of a Graham class from 1957 documents the sequence of contractions, pliés, and leg lifts that constituted a Graham dancer's workout.³⁷ Yet many other exercises were framed in quite personal terms, teaching the students to emulate certain emotional states. They were often explained in terms of Graham's own biography or drawn from one of her dances, which were almost always centered around an anguished—often mythic—female protagonist with whom Graham identified.³⁸

Graham's oeuvre as a whole by 1959 worked with what Martin has called a "familiar and highly organized personal vocabulary" for signifying emotional states. "What happens on stage," Martin wrote of *Clytemnestra* in 1958, "is concerned not with intellectual articulateness but with emotional revelation, as any good ritual and any good work of art must be."³⁹ Thus, however nuanced and full of variation, Graham's physical vocabulary relied on repetition. This produced a situation, as Martin's choice of words above indicates, in which audiences recognized and "read" the emotional narrative told by her dancer-characters as if it were a figurative, hieroglyphic script. For example, the character of Medea in Graham's *Cave of the Heart* (1944), which Rainer saw in 1958, embodies and performs jealousy (fig. 24).⁴⁰ In a version of Medea's dance of revenge videotaped in 1976, when Graham was still directing the Graham company, the dancer who plays Medea emerges from within a spindly metal set piece by Isamu Noguchi and contracts her torso

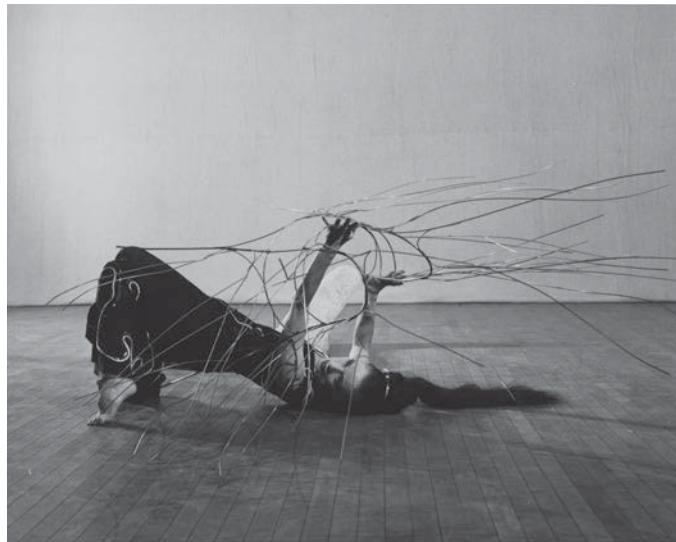


FIGURE 24
Martha Graham in *Cave of the Heart*, ca. 1946. Set piece by Isamu Noguchi. Photographer unknown. Martha Graham Collection Box 241/40, #453, Music Division, U.S. Library of Congress.

almost immediately, indicating the mad feeling literally wrenching the character from within.⁴¹ To Samuel Barber's fast-paced, high-pitched string music, the dancer shakes convulsively and spins. In one intense segment, she pulls a sparkling red sash from her bodice, raises it, and clutches it diabolically, eventually lowering it to the floor. Balancing on her toes and elbows, she writhes above the bit of fabric, thrashing her head from side to side like a beast over its prey, literally and metaphorically consuming her own heart. The dancer's facial expression—grinning throughout, with eyes wide and rolling—acts as an undeniable confirmation, or reiteration, of the seething emotional state in which the audience is meant to see the character. Rainer writes that when she first saw *Clytemnestra* and *Cave of the Heart*, she was "overwhelmed by" them.⁴²

In her first dances, Rainer did not wholly reject Graham's challenging balances and gut-wrenching contractions. Whereas with *Trio A*, Rainer found ways to make the body avoid legible expression, in her early works she went to great lengths to be differently expressive. Thus expression as movement was still present, and some of the movements themselves were quite similar to Graham's, but they did not stand for the same feeling states that they had conveyed in Graham's work. Rainer also distanced herself from Graham in what she added to dance that had not been there before.

Rainer was encouraged to take this distance by her studies with Cunningham, which lasted for eight years, from 1960 to 1968.⁴³ A typical Cunningham class was almost exclusively technical, with very little emphasis on expression. Susan Leigh Foster describes the Cunningham technique as emphasizing "the body's jointedness, combining and recombining body parts in a variety of ways."⁴⁴ In a tribute to Cunningham written in the early 1970s, Rainer described the unique quality she first saw in his way of moving as "the coordination of a pro and the non-definition of an amateur."⁴⁵ "That the performing human body is in and of itself an emotion-conveying instrument," she later wrote, was "something that we who had studied with Merce intuitively absorbed and accepted," and elsewhere she wrote similarly of the "implicit humanity and emotionality of the human body" apparent in Cunningham's work.⁴⁶ In dance history across various methodologies, Cunningham's work is generally understood to have brought "movement represent[ing] nothing other than itself" to modern dance. Thus, for him, "the dance points up an expressiveness in movement itself and seems to empower it with a compelling and passionate logic all its own."⁴⁷ One can imagine, for someone such as Rainer coming from Graham technique classes, where even a hand position required visible muscular effort, and from watching Graham's later performances—in which the dance's emotional content was consistently confirmed (and, for some, reduced) by a melodramatic facial expression—how impressive Cunningham's easeful, pleasurable, matter-of-fact, plain-faced mode of performance must have been.⁴⁸ Cunningham, too, after all, had once studied and danced with Graham.⁴⁹

In two photographs of Rainer performing her first piece of choreography for an audience, *Three Satie Spoons* (1961), she wears a plain black long-sleeved leotard and footless tights, her hair pinned neatly back (figs. 25 and 26). She executes clean shapes, her

FIGURE 25

Yvonne Rainer, *Three Satie Spoons*, 1961. NYPL-PAKQED-TV studio, San Francisco, August 1962. Photo by Warner Jepson.



technique close to perfect. In the first picture she crouches with one leg extended, abdominals and lower back sucked tightly together in a strong Graham-style contraction. Her arms reach forward, balancing against the backward pull of the torso, the fingers of her hands glued and slightly curved in the classic Graham “cup.” In the second image, over legs and hips stationed in a nearly ninety-degree ballet arabesque, her upper body, which would traditionally face away from the raised leg in an arabesque, opens hieratically toward it. The straight arms and pointed index fingers emphasize the effect of the entire body being in one flat plane. These two photographs were taken in the KQED television studio in San Francisco, and though they look posed, they were taken in the midst of performance.⁵⁰ Robert Morris’s account of the dance in a 1966 *Village Voice* review suggests that the effect of stillness was indeed part of the live experience of it. He describes the dance’s “frontal positions” as “Egyptian-like in the opposition of hips to shoulders. The positions are few, repeated several times, pretty much rooted to one spot on the floor. While the movement seems somewhat subsidiary to the registering of the squarish positions, it nevertheless maintains a taut body line and deft strength.”⁵¹

The awareness of the dancer’s strength is key to the viewer’s experience of this piece.⁵² To achieve the effect, described by another viewer, of “remaining in one spot, perform[ing] various balancing exercises mainly on the right leg” for several minutes, Rainer had to deploy a tremendous amount of muscular control.⁵³ We learn in her memoir that such mastery was an important goal for her personally at this time. Speaking of her first triumphant performance of *Three Satie Spoons* in a letter, she wrote, “Certain balances that



FIGURE 26

Yvonne Rainer, *Three Satie Spoons*, 1961. NYPL-PAKQED-TV studio, San Francisco, August 1962. Photo by Warner Jepson.

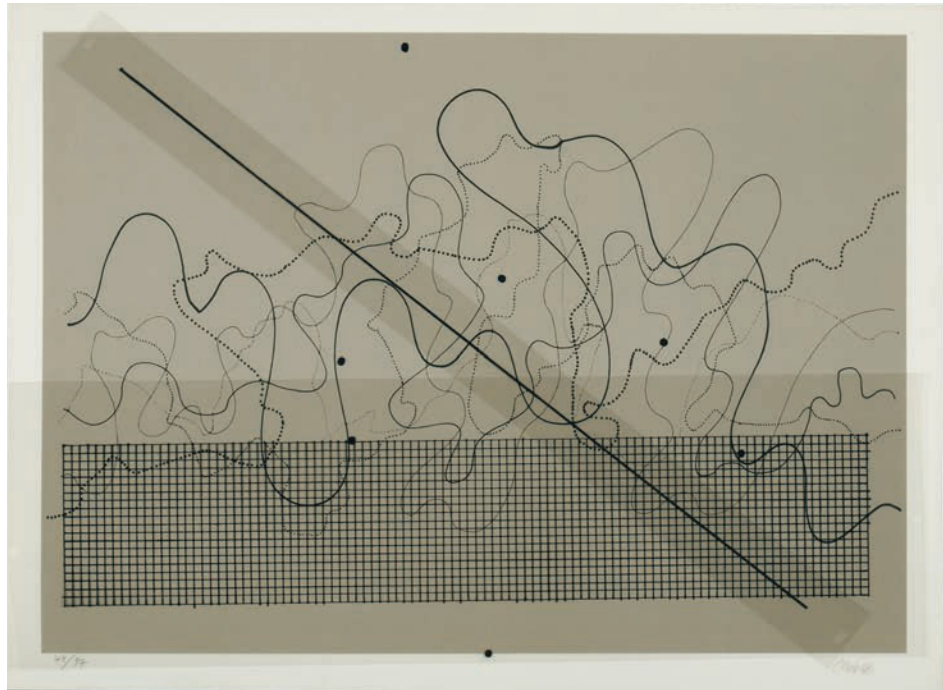
repeatedly gave me trouble in rehearsal were no trouble at all in performance. I had complete control.”⁵⁴

To have the head and torso change more frequently than the stable legs was to emphasize what are conventionally thought to be the more “expressive” parts of the body—the head, arms, and hands. It gave the sense of a mind operating actively, supported by a muscular base. This emphasis encouraged a viewer to look for expression in the upper body, causing it then to stand out that Rainer’s fingers pointed to nothing, and that her face conveyed a sense of concentration more than any emotion. The face in the photographs is not a relaxed face, not random in its expression, but certainly not in the throes of ecstasy or anguish, as Graham’s often was.⁵⁵ It is more the “gaze . . . focused on the kinesthetic sensations of performing the movement” characteristic of Cunningham dancers, and which Halprin also cultivated through her exploration of the task.⁵⁶

Three Satie Spoons was Rainer’s answer to an assignment given by Robert (Bob) Dunn for a weekly composition class that she attended in the fall and spring between 1960 and 1962—a class very much influenced by Cage, a catalogue of whose work Dunn was in the process of editing during these years.⁵⁷ Dunn asked the students to compose a dance using the techniques from Cage’s indeterminate electronic piece *Fontana Mix* (1958), in combination with Eric Satie’s *Trois Gymnopédies* (1919). *Fontana Mix* consisted of tracks

FIGURE 27

John Cage, *Fontana Mix*, 1981.
ED 48/92. Silkscreen on paper
and transparent plastic. 12 pieces:
3 scores, 3 templates with lines,
3 templates with grid, 3 plastic
sheets. Courtesy of the John
Cage Trust.



taped from Italian radio that were edited and ordered through the use of a set of overlapping pages and transparencies (fig. 27).⁵⁸ Because Cage's score for *Fontana Mix* specifies that the work's compositional devices are "not limited to tape music but may be used freely for instrumental, vocal, and theatrical purposes," it makes sense that Dunn deemed the work appropriate to present to a group of dancers. It seems Dunn did not ask his students to use all of *Fontana Mix*'s compositional sheets for the assignment. His description in an interview circa 1970 suggests that he drew on them as a conceptual background for a simpler numerical structuring technique and then paired them, not with "found sound" recordings, but with the meandering piano of the Satie music. Explaining how he presented the assignment to his class, Dunn said, "I played the [Satie] piece and gave them a number structure and they composed a dance, separate from the music but structured with the music in a sort of dovetailing way without any mickey-mousing."⁵⁹

Perhaps inspired by Cage's piece, the slow sequence of hieratic positions in *Three Satie Spoons* was interrupted by not only nondance gestures but also nonsensical phrases and sounds. In the third "Spoon," evoking concerns from the world of painting, Rainer said, "The grass is greener when the sun is yellower. The grass is greener when the sun is yellow."⁶⁰ She also squeaked, "sustained a high note," and bellowed, "ah-oow ah-ooo." Filmmaker Hollis Frampton remembered her making "little mewling sounds." Describing the work in 1980, he wrote, "In the middle of *Three Satie Spoons* she started making noises: little mewling sounds, squeaks, bleats. I was electrified, because it was totally disjunctive

within the situation. There she was in a black leotard, doing something that *looked like* a dance. There was music. And then she did something that seemed to have nothing to do with dance; and there was the momentary question: Is she going crazy? Is this the moment? Are we witnessing it? Are *we* going crazy?"⁶¹

The positional quality and sense of timing linked with a piece of music in *Three Satie Spoons* is more reminiscent of a Graham technique class than one of her dramatic performances. Here Rainer was perhaps putting on display what it was like to do Graham movement as part of one's daily routine, outside the world of a piece as performed. We might think of those classes as providing a context not just for the seriousness and muscular integrity of Rainer's legs in *Three Satie Spoons* but also for her absurd sounds and lines of speech. Such sounds were like little eruptions, what a person might like to do, in technique class, in protest, when one is being asked to channel an attitude of worship or the spirit of Medea planning the murder of her children. To squeak and beep is to refuse to have expression correlate with emotional state at all. It is as if, by evacuating her muscular sequence of emotion or narrative, Rainer was attending to the body as it was while being "prepare[d] . . . by impersonal means . . . for the ordeal of expressiveness."⁶² How to account for this experience, in which the body is active, undergoing an impersonal preparation, but not yet "expressing" anything? Rainer's dance, without textual or gestural meaning to distract from the strength and factual presence of the body, offered one answer. It was as if she were performing Graham movement with Cunningham's or Halprin's expressive style, feeling only the kinaesthetic sensations that such movements created. Meanwhile the ridiculous squeaks and bellows introduced the concept of expression, while simultaneously refusing to produce a sensible utterance—or even an "exclamation" or a "cry." Graham's rigid technique, designed to enable full expressiveness, led in this example to an expressive rebellion that took on a rigid, standardized form.

Rainer continued to explore the effect of a nonmythic but still dramatic female performing persona in her next three dances, *The Bells* (1961), *Three Seascapes* (1962), and a duet based on *Three Satie Spoons* for herself and Trisha Brown called *Satie for Two* (1962). Commenting on a performance in March 1962 that included all three of these works, dance critic Marcia Marks wrote, "Miss Rainer's most characteristic actions—twitching fingers, aimless runs, stomps, accompanied by barks, screams, and gibberish—were also strikingly like those of emotionally disturbed children."⁶³ In the works from this period, in other words, Rainer orchestrated her body (because, of course, all of the actions listed by Marks required a great deal of intention and control) to appear as the body of someone damaged in some way. Critic Lillian Moore agreed, describing *The Bells* with somewhat more hostility: " 'I told you everything would be all right, Harry,' chanted Yvonne Rainer as she pranced around the stage, twiddling her fingers. . . . 'I told you everything would be all right,' Miss Rainer reiterated at the end of the first study, 'The Bells.' But it wasn't."⁶⁴ Thumb twiddling is a legible gesture, but with a meaning that has meaninglessness built into it. It is a sign of self-conscious idleness, something to do while waiting, hailing from

the realm of the mundane rather than from any great human drama. Yet by adding to this movement the unrelated and repeated line to Harry—when there was, furthermore, no one onstage with Rainer except a yellow plywood column, stationed off to the side—Rainer also explored the effect of disjunction between verbal and bodily expression.⁶⁵ Some clearly found the mismatch disquieting—not silly, but closer to the disjunction between word and action of the insane.

Three Seascapes included elements that enacted both emotional and, for the first time, physical disturbance. Like *Three Satie Spoons*, the piece had a tripartite structure. It began with Rainer entering the space wearing purple tights and a heavy winter coat, simply running around the stage, in Moore's words, "like an aimless puppy," to the accompaniment of Sergei Rachmaninoff's elaborate Second Piano Concerto.⁶⁶ One critic who saw a staging of *Three Seascapes* performed in London in 1965 responded to the reversal this posed to the way music and dance conventionally joined to convey emotion: "Usually dancing carries the main emotional weight with music as an accompaniment, and this was an experiment in the converse, highly emotional music and deliberately non-emotional movement."⁶⁷

The second section of *Three Seascapes* was set to the aggressive scraping and screeching of La Monte Young's *Poem for Tables, Chairs, Benches* (1960), which he performed in the lobby of the Maidman Playhouse by pushing chairs and tables across the floor. Onstage, Rainer traveled along the diagonal from the back left corner to the front right, doing what Moore bluntly described as "a reasonably accurate imitation of a spastic cripple," but which Marks saw as weaving "her way through imaginary waves."⁶⁸

In a photograph of Rainer rehearsing this section from 1963, she stands on the ball of one foot with the other foot raised (fig. 28). Both knees are bent, giving an awkward balance to the exaggerated walk. She carries one bent arm gracefully in front of her torso, but the other is flung out carelessly to the side like a baby's arm. Neither hand does anything intentionally; each falls downward or backward off its respective wrist, fingers retracting unevenly. Rainer's head tilts downward, looking toward the ground past some strands of hair that have come loose, and the curve this creates in her neck extends to her whole torso, which is bent slightly forward over the stepping legs. She looks like an introverted Pied Piper, or a slightly autistic skipping maiden.

In the rendition of *Three Seascapes* included in a restaging of Rainer's early work at the Getty in 2004, directed by Rainer, Patricia Hoffbauer's performance revealed the second section to be a slow, fluid, but awkward bit of traveling, the constant shifts in position seemingly requiring her to fling body parts and heave her weight around.⁶⁹ As I watched the videotape, I jotted down the following list in an effort at description: "angular elbows, a slobbering hand to mouth movement, hand trailing down chin, head and neck undulating, really disjointed, suspicious look over shoulder, looking up at sky with mouth gaping (à la Salpetrière), up to tip-toes and then knees bent in a Caveman posture." Eventually the agonizing chair sounds (on a recording at the Getty) stop, and the dancer walks calmly offstage.



FIGURE 28
Yvonne Rainer rehearsing *Three Seascapes*, 1963. Photo by Al Giese.
Courtesy of Wendy Perron.

In the third section of *Three Seascapes*, Rainer entered with an armload of white tulle and “that coat,”⁷⁰ dropped both on the ground downstage right, and then proceeded to have a thrashing, screaming fit, flinging parts of the material into the air and rolling around in it, sometimes rising to a standing position before falling back down. Marks wrote that it was as if “she awoke screaming from a nightmare.”⁷¹ This section was derived from an earlier screaming fit Rainer performed in Simone Forti’s *See-Saw* at the Reuben Gallery in December 1960 (fig. 29). That one, which took place while Rainer sat at one end of a wooden plank, had been the product of an improvisation exercise in which Forti had asked Rainer to “perform” a jacket thrown on the floor.⁷² On the other end of the rudimentary seesaw during Rainer’s screaming fit, wearing identical sweater, trunks, and bare legs, her fellow performer Robert Morris (married to Forti in 1960), flatly read aloud *Artnews*, a magazine whose pages at that time were largely devoted to discussions of painting.⁷³ *Three Seascapes*’ screaming fit with the coat made Forti’s original directing prop visible and, with the addition of a swathe of the material traditionally reserved for ballet tutus, registered Rainer’s counterpart in dance history to the painting tradition that *See-Saw* parodied. Both painting and ballet were being undone.

Rainer’s negation in the last section of *Three Seascapes* was explicitly not as articulate as Morris’s bored reading in *See-Saw*, however. Each of the three seascapes, in fact, offers a different version of seemingly mindless bodily communication. With the combination of ordinary running in a body-concealing coat and the Rachmaninoff, she put a frame around our tendency as viewers to project our emotional reading of music onto the body with which it is juxtaposed—or into the consciousness we believe it contains. By imitating the contortions of a spastic, she brought into her dance a personage who does not have control over her bodily communication, and thus introduced the notion of involuntary expression and the questions that accompany it about the sort of feeling to which it corresponds. In the final section, she made both her utterance and her movement as amorphous



FIGURE 29
Simone Forti, *See-Saw*, 1960.
Reuben Gallery, New York, 1960.
Performers: Robert Morris and
Yvonne Rainer. Photo by Robert
McElroy. Yvonne Rainer Papers,
Getty Research Institute,
Los Angeles.



FIGURE 30

Yvonne Rainer, *Satie for Two*, 1962.
Performers: Yvonne Rainer and
Trisha Brown. Photographer
unknown. Yvonne Rainer Papers,
Getty Research Institute,
Los Angeles.

as a tangled pile of light gauze, screaming in a way that reminded at least one viewer (Marks) of someone not yet fully emerged from the depths of unconsciousness.

Satie for Two, Rainer notes in her 1974 book *Work 1961–73*, had the “same structure as *Three Satie Spoons*,” but the critics’ accounts confirm that it differed in its inclusion of a number of movements on the floor and a wider array of nonverbal sounds (fig. 30).⁷⁴ “They crawled under and over each other,” reports Moore, and Marks describes the part of the dance before “the dancers rose from the floor” as “tiney [sic], private moments [that] were quite fascinating.”⁷⁵ Once up, however, Moore says, they “began ululating,” while for Marks they “barked, yelped, chattered gibberish”; neither critic was impressed. Walter Terry would add “grunt, and yap” to the list of sounds. He referred to the dance as “pretty childish.”⁷⁶

Twiddling, running, tumbling. Needlessly assuring, screaming, yelping. Rainer opened her first dances to the subjects of childhood, animality, and insanity—or what was

euphemized as “emotional disturbance.” In so doing, she took up a subject hardly new to modernist art, dance included. Graham, for one, described the character of Medea as “a woman who is obsessed and maddened by love.”⁷⁷ Yet Rainer’s version presented these figures of the madwoman and the animal-child in a disturbingly unanchored way, without a narrative and with no identifiable boundary between the woman, the dancer, and her role. Despite its joking tone, Frampton’s memory of his experience of *Three Satie Spoons*, cited above, registers the potential for collapse between performance and performer when confronted outside of narrative in this way. Questions arose as to what Rainer was doing and why. Was her dance somehow autobiographical? Without a narrative context, the extent to which lack of self-consciousness, or mental illness, is communicated by bodily signs came especially forward. Her viewer had nothing to attend to but Rainer’s bodily drama, no other body through which she might, through identification, distance herself from the spastic other. Rainer claimed her preference in these works for involuntary expression as a source of content or intensity over named and dramatized personal emotions.

A proposal Steve Paxton made in an interview in 1994 offers an accounting for his generation’s distance from Graham. Upon arriving in New York, beginning to take classes and perform, he said, “I didn’t know how . . . to utter in movement the deep emotional events that seemed to be characterizing other people’s work.”⁷⁸ Rainer similarly reports that she was told she was “too ‘cerebral’ ” by acting teachers in the 1950s: “They didn’t believe me, they said.”⁷⁹ After informing the interviewer that his father had been a marine in World War II, Paxton relates his limitations to his upbringing: “I think I come from a generation of deprived people. . . . My parents left me alone.” As children who had lived through the war, Paxton’s and Rainer’s generation grew up around adults actively or recently traumatized by its events—a trauma quickly denied by the popular media’s insistence that the war had been unambiguously victorious, pointing to the thriving health of the nation’s increasing number of children as proof. Paxton conjures a world in which feelings were held in and worked around, present but unspeakable, resulting in the emergence of a generation of artists who asked that their audience be as attentive to what was not expressed as to what was. Robert Barry’s conceptual placard from 1969, *All of the Things I Know But of Which I Am Not at the Moment Thinking*, comes to mind, as do Bruce Nauman’s words on his performances from the 1960s: “What is given *and* what is withheld becomes the work.”⁸⁰ The form this generation gave to the negative effects of modernity in its historical moment was neither a complaint nor a cry. Rather, the heightened sense of alienation brought to everyday life by postwar consumer culture often took the form of whatever was left, concretely, after expression had been refused or withdrawn.

ORDINARINESS ONSTAGE

Rainer noted in her tribute to Cunningham that the only movement she could execute with his level of confident ease was running. Eventually she figured out that what she wanted

from Cunningham—more than the exact shapes that his body formed—was the feeling his body conveyed, through unintended movements, of “body-ease.”⁸¹ The question of how to present the look of ordinariness became increasingly central to Rainer’s work; she left the performing personas of the insane person, the child, and the spastic behind and began to explore versions of non-art that did not require her to access the guise of the other. This happened largely in conversation with the Judson Dance Workshop, a community of dancers that began as a group of five meeting in Dunn’s experimental composition class in the fall of 1960: Rainer, Paxton, Forti, Paulus Berenson, and Marni Mahaffay.⁸² All had studied with Cunningham or Halprin except Berenson, who was Graham-trained. Rainer had begun taking technique class at the Cunningham school earlier that year, and had just attended Halprin’s summer workshop in August. United by the avant-garde perspective inherited from these teachers, the students liked working together so much that when Dunn’s class ended in 1962—by then, a group of nineteen plus several occasional participants—they kept meeting for several years. Their cohort had by then expanded to include artists who were not trained dancers, like Morris, and it continued to diversify, incorporating Carolee Schneemann later in 1962. The collective met briefly in Rainer’s studio and then in the scuffed gymnasium in the basement of the Judson Memorial Church in Washington Square in New York. Rainer attended the weekly sessions regularly during 1962 and 1963.⁸³

Thus far in Rainer’s oeuvre, the “ordinary” had appeared in the form of plain running in *Three Seascapes* and as a list of names and places in a transitional work called *Ordinary Dance* (1962), in which Rainer did movements while delivering a stream-of-consciousness narrative about her own early history. An ordinary movement functioned as one of a number of elements chosen because they did not resemble art. This is true even of Rainer’s most bizarre movements and spoken phrases, which, she has said, evolved in imitation of insane women encountered on the subway, and thus for an audience of city dwellers, one could argue, referenced ordinary, everyday experience.⁸⁴ But it was not until *We Shall Run*, performed January 1963, that Rainer presented an entire dance consisting of everyday movements that almost all audience members could recognize as similar to their own. The twelve dancers in *We Shall Run* just jogged steadily for seven minutes, while the *Tuba mirum* from Hector Berlioz’s *Requiem* played in the background. Anyone who could remember the sequence of fairly complex floor patterns could do the dance without having to look crazy or childlike, and indeed Rainer used both dancers and nondancers (fig. 31). They wore their own clothes, which, we see in one photograph of the work by Peter Moore, varied from the printed dress worn by Sally Gross to Rainer’s sweatpants (fig. 32).⁸⁵

Terrain (performed April 1963), Rainer’s first evening-length work, combined dance and nondance movement, but expanded the latter to include the look of play in the thirty-to forty-minute section by that name. Dancers bounced balls and played games with them onstage, in addition to dancing with them in various ways. In a photograph of the subsection of “Play” called “Fast,” four dancers try to prevent Trisha Brown—who has grabbed the ball and broken out of the group—from reaching the opposite side of the stage (fig. 33). Balls from

FIGURE 32

Peter Moore, performance view of Yvonne Rainer's *We Shall Run*, 1965. (Originally choreographed 1963.) Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, Conn., March 7, 1965. Performers: Rainer, Deborah Hay, Robert Rauschenberg, Robert Morris, Sally Gross, Joseph Schlichter, Tony Holder, Alex Hay. Yvonne Rainer Papers, Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles.



FIGURE 33

Yvonne Rainer, *Terrain* ("Fast" in the section called "Play"), 1963. Judson Memorial Church, New York, 28 or 29 April 1963. Trisha Brown pictured at far left. Photo by Al Giese. Yvonne Rainer Papers, Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles.





FIGURE 34
Peter Moore, performance view
of Yvonne Rainer's *Parts of
Some Sextets*, 1965. Wadsworth
Atheneum, Hartford, CT, March 7,
1965. Yvonne Rainer Papers, Getty
Research Institute, Los Angeles.

previous games and dances are visible on the floor. As mentioned in the introduction to this book, *Terrain* also presented dancers who seemed to be just standing around, a traffic blockade found in the street functioning as a station where they waited to perform (see fig. 1). Whatever their bodies happened to do while they stood there was visible to the audience.

With *Parts of Some Sextets* (1965), Rainer centered her dance around the manipulation of a stack of mattresses, the thin but not quite fully flexible kind found on institutional beds. She devised various tasks for the dancers to execute: lifting, stacking, rolling the cumbersome rectangles, flinging their bodies onto them, or passing another human body as if it were a mattress, letting the similarities and differences between the two kinds of object/body come forward as they would (fig. 34).

In *We Shall Run*, *Terrain*, and *Parts of Some Sextets*, Rainer presented the type of task Halprin had taught her to use in the summer of 1960 as a means of exploring the habits of the body and generating choreography. In an interview with Rainer in 1965, Halprin, like Cage, linked her techniques to a refusal of tired or stereotypical expression: "The purpose of the improvisation was not self-expression. I was trying to get at subconscious

areas, so things would happen in an unpredictable way. I was trying to eliminate stereotyped ways of reacting. Improvisation was used to release things that were blocked off because we were traditional modern dancers.”⁸⁶ Often the emphasis of a particular exercise was on anatomy alone: “Sometimes it would be purely physical. . . . We would isolate in an anatomical and objective way the body as an instrument.” But even when the focus was on functionality, the broader aim was always generating shared collective form: “Doing a task created an attitude that would bring the movement quality into another kind of reality. It was devoid of a certain kind of introspection”—the kind that dwelled only in itself.

Forti, a member of Halprin’s first experimental dance group from 1956 to 1959, explains that Halprin’s exercises were a means of tuning into the sensations in one’s body, both internally generated and in response to one’s environment (usually the natural environment in the spaces surrounding the specially designed dance deck outside Halprin’s house on Mount Tamalpais, in Marin County, California.) Dancers were asked to focus on a particular part of the body or aspect of their surroundings—without controlling it—and to improvise movement based on what they noticed. Forti describes one exercise that involved walking in a circle and trying to stay with the pace of the group. Though no one person instigated any changes, the circle accelerated to a run and slowed down to a collapsed heap during the course of the exercise. It was “an autonomous moment of communion,” she said.⁸⁷ Such exercises were part and parcel of an entire system invested with what could be called Halprin’s primitivist faith (distinct from Graham’s primitivism) in the ordinary body’s fundamental grace.⁸⁸

It is significant that Rainer presented as dance what, in Halprin’s classes, would have been treated as exercises.⁸⁹ The dancer’s everyday—the practical aspects of training the body that were part of the process that produces a dance—was something that Rainer had already made visible in *Three Satie Spoons*. When the quality being cultivated in the dancer was ordinary ease, as it was in Halprin’s classes, rather than the strength to undergo the ordeal of expressiveness, as it was in Graham’s, the exercises themselves began to look more like everyday movement than dance. Emphasizing “practice” in a modernist way in dance thus, for Rainer working with Halprin’s technique, came to resemble something much more recognizable to any viewer, the process involved in life’s everyday labors.

When she made *We Shall Run*, Rainer produced a dance much closer to Steve Paxton’s work than anything she had done so far. Rainer’s exploration of ordinary movement during 1962–63 took place very much in dialogue with Paxton, a fellow student in Dunn’s class, a dancer with the Cunningham company, and a Judson workshop participant. He had presented overtly everyday activities in his dance *Proxy*, in which he and Rainer performed along with Jennifer Tipton, in the first concert at Judson (on the same program with Rainer’s *Ordinary Dance*.)⁹⁰

In *Proxy* the dancers repeatedly enter and exit the space in front of a curtain, circling it, just walking past. At times they pause on a square of tape on the floor and eat a pear or drink a glass of water. At one point Tipton stands inside a basin outfitted with a hidden

FIGURE 35

Merce Cunningham, *Antic Meet*, 1958, performed in 1963. Performers: Steve Paxton and Merce Cunningham. Photo by Jack Mitchell.



layer of ball bearings in a ballet passé position (one knee forming a sharp, flag-like triangle perpendicular to her other, straight leg) while Paxton rolls her around the space. *Proxy* also included sequences based on sports photographs from the media. Dancers moved slowly into and out of a sequence of legible, athletic poses.⁹¹

Paxton, who came from Arizona, chose to study with Cunningham at the summer academy of modern dance at Connecticut College in 1958 because Cunningham was the most experimental of the various teachers working with students there.⁹² He was attracted by Cunningham's reputation for composing his works using chance operations, such as tossing coins.⁹³ Cunningham's appeal for Paxton was the promise of a relinquishment of authorial control and importance. He seemed to offer a way of working with something other than the egotistical wish for audience approval and public recognition as its goal. Studying with Cunningham, and then eventually dancing in his company from 1961 to 1965, disappointed Paxton, however, and hardened his resolve against hierarchy (fig. 35).

Cunningham had used everyday actions in a dance called *Collage* (1953), in which, according to Jill Johnston, fifteen people not trained as dancers performed the movements of "washing the hands, combing the hair, powdering the face or filing the nails. They also skipped, walked, ran, turned somersaults, and stood on their hands."⁹⁴ Such movements were also incorporated into the later collaboration with Cage, *Variations V* (1965), in which Cunningham potted a plant and rode a bicycle across the stage.⁹⁵ But these were fairly isolated occurrences. Cunningham's work overall was still too much about glamour for Paxton, functioning, as the younger dancer's later account of his development suggests, as a point of contrast rather than a source. In a 1980 interview Paxton explained, "In fact, that was maybe the surprise and the humor of it, was how ordinary [my work] was in the face of the glamour of Cunningham and the speed and the pacing and the Rauschenberg costumes and the Chernavitch [sic] lighting and, you know, all the sparkle that could be generated. The Cage

music and the brilliance of Tudor and Cage's presentation of that music, and the brilliance of the dancers in that company. All of that dazzle. I mean it *was* dazzle. It was high-class goods and I'm not putting it down or saying it was in any way a pretense. But it was, at the same time, stunning, a stunning experience."⁹⁶ His own work was intended to have a less aggressive effect on the viewer's senses: "Nothing was, there was very little momentum to the work, you know. There was no, nothing to get a kinetic kick out of unless you were interested in looking at ordinary walking, ordinary standing still. They were complex compositions, but they wouldn't take you to, they wouldn't take you on kinetic highs at all."

For Paxton, then, everyday actions dismantled dance's hierarchy, in which impressive skill traditionally took precedence over easy movements; but they also, he explained, dismantled the hierarchy established by his own attention to his body: "It had to do with invisibility. The ordinary is, in a sense, un-visible, invisible, because it's . . . ordinary. The senses tune it out. . . . What I thought was that one spends so much time in one's body ignoring it, being with other focuses. And I was real interested to see, to examine and to question what was going on when one was doing this activity that was really setting one's set most of the time. I might spend five or six hours a day working on my body and working on dance, working on movement, working on momentum and balance and ability to turn and ability to bend myself into odd shapes and all that. And yet all the rest of the time my body was just carrying on by itself and I became really interested to see what was happening on that level. I felt it was important."⁹⁷ There is a sense, in Paxton's account, in which he understood his dances to be fighting for the "little guy," the little body that no one pays attention to. He would bring to it the visibility that it deserved, not because it was better but simply because it existed. It was a sort of realism. In asking himself and his audience to focus on everyday unselfconsciousness, he might alter everyday habits of mind. He wished his work to right an injustice or imbalance, and did not speak of a particular emotional effect he wished it to present or have on his audience. In his conceptual project, the dance was a vehicle for, or driven by, ideas he wanted to put forth, whether the audience liked them or not.

Paxton's determination to get away from the glamour and star system of modern dance and ballet made him the most idealistic of the Judson workshop participants in his commitment to everydayness. He was hard on Rainer for her persistent dependence on charisma, subtly challenging her to make a dance that did not showcase her charms, however quirky they may have been.⁹⁸ It has been frequently remarked that Paxton made the most "severe," "rigorous," and "boring" work of anyone at Judson.⁹⁹ "None of Steve's pieces ever worked," Deborah Hay reported in 1983. "But it was a freedom, a process of creating something that never got quite created. . . . Nobody ever knew what was happening in Steve's pieces."¹⁰⁰ Dunn remembered Paxton's work in an interview as "anxiety-provoking":

DUNN: Steve Paxton was marvelous. In ways I think he was the most anxiety-provoking of all the choreographers in the early Judson programs.

MCDONAGH: What did he do?

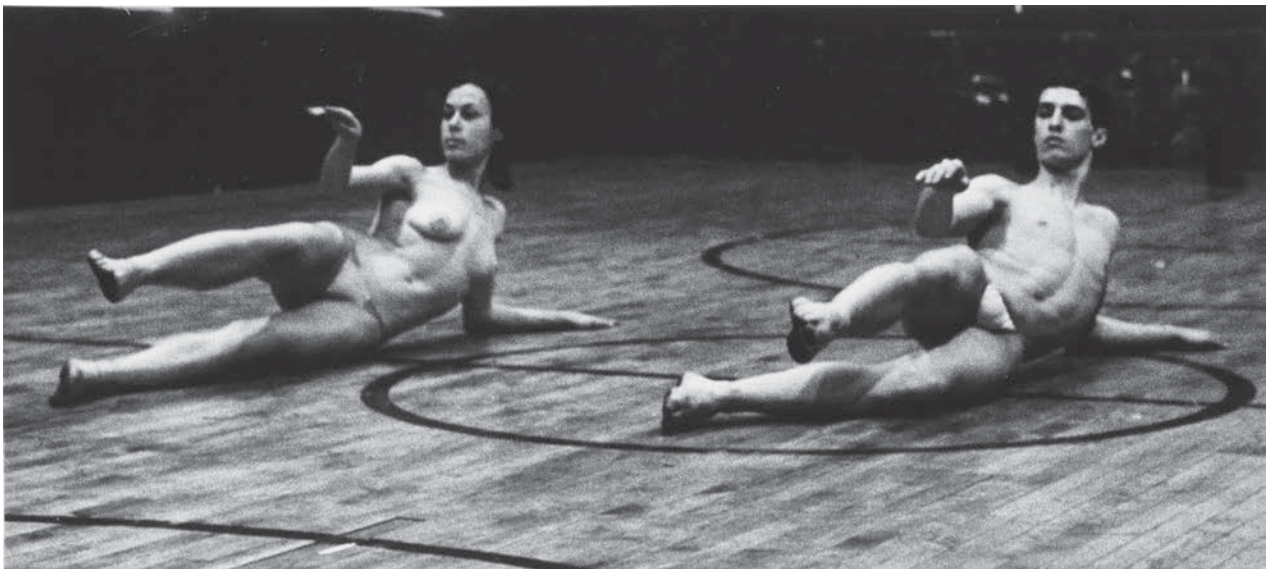
DUNN: I don't know. His pieces were just so wide open and so slow and they did not take any standard psychological form. I can just feel the effect on my nerves. They were wide open and unencompassable. Dances where Steve just very solidly and sturdily did a few things just the way they were. And there was a non-psychological or anti-psychological atmosphere surrounding these things, and I don't know whether it was so much their provocation or lack of provocation that made you feel anxious as much as the fact that they couldn't be encompassed by the recipe. You had to look at what was happening, the basic elements of dance, of theater, of light, of space, of sound. There was nothing very much to grasp onto. You just had to undergo them.¹⁰¹

In his efforts to distance his work from impressively expressive stars, it seems, Paxton ended up producing anxiety, projecting it, rather than, like Graham, internalizing it to generate form, or like Cunningham, distracting the audience from it with complex formal arrangements.

Paxton's interrogations of expressivity in dance also played out in a removal of the particularities of personality from his dancers. In *Word Words*, performed with Rainer on the same program as *We Shall Run* at Judson in 1963, his decision to perform naked—save for a pair of G-strings and, for Rainer, a pair of pasties, and some pancake makeup to even out their facial features and freckles—was the last of a series of attempts, including the use of gorilla suits and “zombie-like” facial expressions, to make the two dancers look as alike as possible (fig. 36).¹⁰² For the final dance, Rainer performed a sequence of movements while Paxton leaned against the wall and watched. Then Paxton performed the same movements while Rainer watched. Then they both danced the movement together. It lasted about twenty minutes.¹⁰³ John Herbert McDowell tells how “very interesting” *Word Words* became once the dancers removed their clothes, though it had been “pretty boring”

FIGURE 36

Steve Paxton, *Word Words*, 1963.
Judson Memorial Church, 1963.
Performers: Yvonne Rainer and
Paxton. Photo by Henry Genn.
Yvonne Rainer Papers, Getty
Research Institute, Los Angeles.



in rehearsal.¹⁰⁴ Anne Wagner once noted while introducing Rainer at a speaking engagement how oddly alike the two do look in photographs. The exposure of all of their physical differences improbably rendered them anatomical specimens rather than a sexualized pair, similarly muscular and lean, equally capable of executing a moderately athletic feat. The fact, apparent in the photographs, that they did not look at each other or otherwise interact further downplayed their gender difference—it decreased the chance of seeing anything they did in terms of gendered roles.

Nudity, then—without context, unexplained, and inspiring no apparent embarrassment or self-consciousness—made *Word Words* strange, neither everyday nor classical. Yet on the other hand, nudity was what allowed Paxton to present the body matter-of-factly. Viewers were more likely to notice the absence of sexual frisson where they expected it most. Naked, but firmly outlined and tough, the body was a term made plural. Word plus Word equals Words: any body would do to make this point. The piece demonstrated for its viewers a level of basic, casual embodiment on which all bodily experience is the same.

In Paxton's *English* (1963), in which Rainer also performed, everyone in the group dance used soap and pancake makeup to downplay eyebrows, freckles, and lip color. They entered the performance space in a column, some facing forward and some backward, encouraging audience members to find the back of the head no less expressive than the muted front. There were those who thought they looked like "robotic automatons."¹⁰⁵ *English* came up in the 1980 interview with Paxton as an example of the way that the plainness of ordinary movement could allow it to give form to more abstract themes: "Like the idea of an explosion. . . . It occurred three times. And basically what happened was that the people just walked—from a fairly tight group they walked to a scattered group, back to a tight group. So they were just walking, but there was this sense of inflation perhaps and decompression or something, or compression, as they came into the center."¹⁰⁶ Paxton's refusal to let his performers' faces be expressive, in order to downplay the importance of any one person in the dance and to highlight abstract concepts, also, as in *Word Words*, minimized their specificity. Rainer's dances, by contrast, did not work against the appearance of difference; on the contrary, her version of the ordinary made room for it.

Like Paxton, Rainer rejected Cunningham's virtuosity, but she was not as interested in completely forgoing the theatrical. She did not have anyone speak in *We Shall Run*, nor do anything strikingly ugly or strange; she merely presented a group running en masse, shifting and changing direction like a school of fish so that no one person occupied a central or front-row position (fig. 37). She set all of this, however, against the swelling, bombastic sounds of Berlioz's three-hundred-person choir with cannon firing. Paxton, meanwhile, used no music in his dances during these years. Rainer may have been "becoming more and more in opposition to" "certain kinds of theatricality" at that time, but in order to make the work stage that critique, she later explained, "I had to incorporate both strands into my work, the theatrical one, and the oppositional, polemic pedestrian one."¹⁰⁷ To invoke Greenberg again, art was not expressionist for Rainer, but it still "incorporate[d]



FIGURE 37

Peter Moore, performance view of Yvonne Rainer's *We Shall Run*, 1965. (Originally choreographed 1963.) Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, CT, March 7, 1965. Performers: Robert Rauschenberg, Sally Gross, Joseph Schlichter, Tony Holder, Deborah Hay, Rainer, Alex Hay, Robert Morris, Lucinda Childs.

contemporary feeling." Though the movement was very plain and the facial expressions fairly calm, with eyes generally cast downward, the bodies in *We Shall Run*—united in their shared purpose, chugging along with matter-of-fact confidence in their capacity to complete their fairly simple but purposeless and artful task—do convey a feeling of serenity, or something like it. Critics responded accordingly. Johnston, dance critic for the *Village Voice* during these years, was often moved by Rainer's work. *We Shall Run* led her to flatly cheer in her review, "Hurray for people."¹⁰⁸

Rainer accessed the small involuntary movements that highlight the body's physicality in *We Shall Run* by giving her performers something easy to do. Her work, like Paxton's, displayed an interest in the times when the body was "just carrying on by itself," but her intentions can nonetheless be distinguished from his. She has written of her resistance to the hope for transcendence latent in some of Paxton's ideas about dance.¹⁰⁹ There was no transcendent moment of appreciation or charm hoped for when Rainer presented jogging, moving a mattress, or leaning on a traffic blockade—no triumph of the little body. There was only "the implicit humanity and emotionality of the human body," and this was hard to make truly, spontaneously available.¹¹⁰ For Rainer, the use of ordinary movement in 1963 was a strategy for achieving a particular physical effect in and on the substance of

the body. Her dances with actual tasks during these years put a frame around small, unintended or awkward movements and the rise in her performers of emotional states that were rich without being extraordinary, allowing “feeling to appear tacitly at the margins of the body and the dance,” as Foster has put it.¹¹¹ What do people look like when they are mentally and physically engaged in an activity? The patterns in which her performers ran in *We Shall Run* were just complicated enough to engage them on a level of thoughtful investment: “I’m-going-to-get-it-right,” says one person’s comportment to me; I look for another in Moore’s iconic photograph that says, “I’m making a mess of this,” and think I may see it there in Robert Rauschenberg, apparently fairly uncoordinated, hovering just behind Morris, third from the left (see fig. 32).¹¹² Rainer presented a body that was alien to the dance stage, but meant to be familiar to the average person.

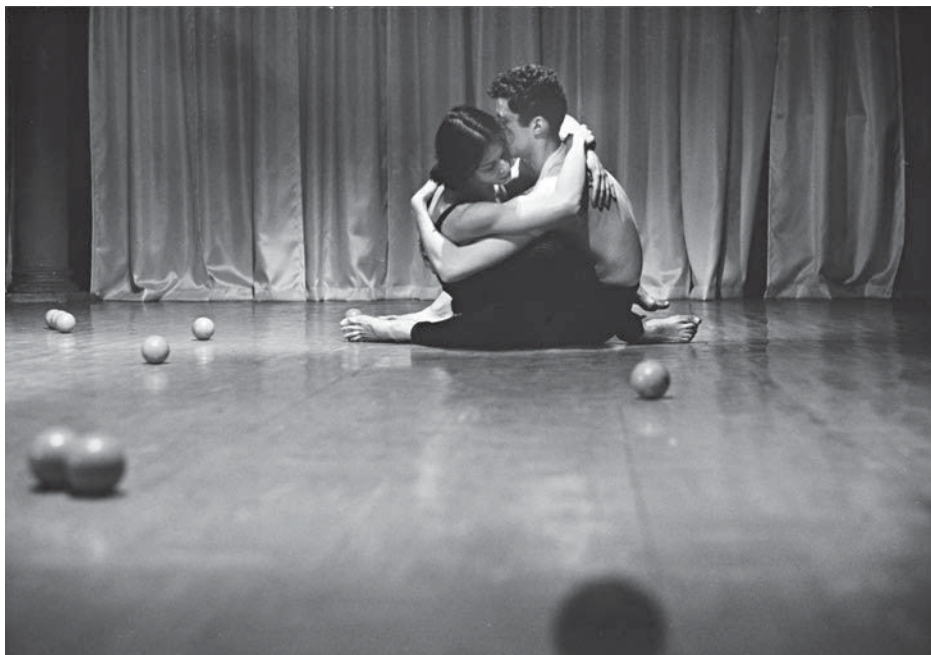
Paxton’s dancers walked because those were the instructions. If his performer was actually thirsty when she went to drink the glass of water in *Proxy*, then perhaps some small signs of pleasure or satisfaction would become visible in the dancer’s body, but this would have been more of a triggered thirst than anything rightly called spontaneous or accidental. He gave his dancers no engaging reason for doing what they were doing. Thus Paxton’s everyday movements were, in general, emptied out emotionally, truly separated, like locust shells, from the everyday living world that he intended to honor. The everyday was turned into a recognizable concept. Art became the site of rigor. Feeling happened privately—each viewer was left to his or her own. Rainer’s work, in contrast, is as much about everyday feeling as the look of the ordinary, and for a felt process to take form in art, she needed material; she needed accident. She contrived situations within a theatrical setting that would lead her performers’ passive bodies to produce the effects she wanted to put on display. This became an important metaphor in her work as time went on.

Comparing Rainer and Paxton allows us to see two related but quite different versions of the everyday coming out of the Judson Dance Theater in 1963. In both artists’ works, the bodies are clearly executing a repetitive movement script, and thus appear passive to some external control. Yet in Paxton’s bodies, even when naked, any aspect of vulnerability in that passivity is only implied. He offers a body that is externally controlled, but appears materially and emotionally as if there were nothing very unruly to control in the first place. In Rainer’s work, the vulnerability in passivity—in the body giving in to gravity, in giving off signs of spontaneous thought, in its not knowing and controlling at every moment exactly what it is doing—this vulnerability is not foregrounded, per se, but made available as a positive, as something importantly true about the ordinary body. The elements that signal passivity are inextricably tied to the actions themselves. Both belong to the everyday.

Yet the everyday feeling conveyed by Rainer’s work has not always been received with ease, as some of Johnston’s criticism makes clear. Johnston liked the meaning she found in *We Shall Run* very much, as mentioned above. But although she also approved of many aspects of *Terrain*, some of her responses to this work became more conflicted.

FIGURE 38

Yvonne Rainer, *Terrain* ("Love" in the section called "Play"), 1963. Judson Memorial Church, New York, April 28 or 29, 1963. Performers: Rainer and William Davis. Photo by Al Giese. Yvonne Rainer Papers, Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles.



The affect conveyed at the end of *Terrain*'s fourth section, "Love," was strange, she thought (fig. 38). "Love" was a duet between Rainer and William Davis in which they executed a series of poses copied from Hindu erotic sculpture in the Kama Sutra while speaking a lovers' dialogue with very little vocal intonation: "I love you," "I don't love you," "Do you love me?" "I've never loved you," and so on. The dialogue was based on an overheard quarrel.¹¹³ Describing the duet in a later essay, Johnston wrote, "They could have been ordering groceries for all the words had to do with the feeling normally associated with them. The movement itself was performed with the same bland, impassive expression."¹¹⁴ Johnston was intrigued and challenged by this, what she called "the total absence, in the quality of performance, of that emotion which might normally accompany that motion."¹¹⁵ She tried to describe the effect of this absence on her as a viewer—"I don't know if I was moved or not by the game of 'Love,' the duet"—and then went on to muse on art and intimacy and its worth and possibility at that moment. She confessed that she would have liked to have felt more involved and moved by the dance, but was not sure how Rainer might have made this happen. She admitted that too much intimate information would probably have ended up "driving you away."

Johnston also admitted, however, that there was one "moment" when "for some old-fashioned reason," her "blood rushed": "It was the moment at the end, just as they untangle and Miss Rainer sits slowly on Mr. Davis's lap (both in a semi-standing position) and the Bach chorale [*Ich Habe Genug*] suddenly fills the church."¹¹⁶ Thus what she later, somewhat differently, called the "factual delivery of emotional words and movement," did not rule out Johnston's felt response to other aspects of the dance.¹¹⁷ The biggest emotional rise

for her was upon witnessing, as in the first of the *Three Seascapes*, the combination of big swelling music and an unspectacular, not-quite-legible gesture. I imagine there was some awkwardness as Rainer felt with her rear end for the slanted surface of Davis's thighs behind her; something poignant when she finally, tired near the end of a long performance, let her weight fall into the support of his body. Or perhaps it was that this pairing looked the most to Johnston like ordinary erotic intimacy, in a way that the poses from the Kama Sutra, more precise and sculptural, just did not. In choosing this moment—actual because awkward—as the signal for the loudest, most dramatic music of the evening, Rainer underscored the importance for her of the humble sitting, coping body. It was this body she expected and wanted her viewers to observe and respond to.

I think we can see the ambiguity in the couple's relationship and in the movements of "Love" as an indication of Rainer's awareness of the risk involved in inviting the everyday into art. Her differences from Paxton reveal the different models of art under which they were operating. In Paxton's model a clearly delineated idea guided a process, and the process did not muddy or resist the idea. The ordinary is pared down in his work, its humble elegance made recognizable, if nevertheless anxiety-provoking because so detached from narrative structure, and the viewer is thrown back on herself to supply the work with emotional content. Rainer's model was closer to that of modernist abstraction from the first half of the twentieth century: she arranged sensuous relationships between material and structure within a frame, available for the viewer to get caught up in and feel. What was different about her version, and very much of the contemporary experimental moment, was the inclusion of ordinary actions, gestures, and things among her materials, and a notion of structure that operated independently of established formulas. The risk, however, in doing away with beauty, and specialness, and what counts as same, is that there will be no art anymore—there will be no compelling formal language, perhaps nothing visible as an act of intended human communication. This risk is even higher for an artist with Rainer's matter-of-fact attitude about what attending to the ordinary could ever be—neither transcendent nor triumphant. And if one wanted to be critical of the everyday reality of a consumer society in the mid-twentieth-century United States, broadcasting and watching its latest war on television, then by focusing so exclusively on the ordinary, one ran the risk of reproducing that society's empty images, its exhausting rhythms, constraining structures, and insensitive coolness. At what point does the everyday become so familiar that the viewer is merely recognizing rather than looking and thinking? Drinking a glass of water. Lifting a bulky object. Jogging across the room. In each case, the viewer knows what she is seeing, and she knows exactly where to find herself in relation to it. Nothing is troubling or obscure enough to make her feel or think herself differently. Rainer went on to address this problem in her works of the later 1960s, beginning with *Trio A*, but the basics of what she sought for art, in meaning to be found by the placement of a passive and unruly material within a structure, already existed in these early Judson works, territory mapped in relation to her friend Steve Paxton, the withdrawn idealist.

FROM TASK TO TASKLIKE

Minimalism, it seems, provided something of an answer to the problem of recognizability for Rainer. The minimalist turn in her work circa 1966 made it more rather than less art-like, by reinserting a needed distance between the viewer and the form. With *Trio A*, she presented the tasklike, rather than just the task, achieving a quality of everydayness in a form just strange enough to make her viewers aware of the body in a new way.

The minimalist sculptures with which Rainer was in closest dialogue were those by Morris, who became Rainer's romantic partner and sometimes collaborator from 1964 to 1970. In 1966, Rainer and Morris both wrote essays outlining new parameters for what the work of art should do and be. Rainer's essay (already cited in this chapter) with the long title "A Quasi Survey of Some 'Minimalist' Tendencies in the Quantitatively Minimal Dance Activity Midst the Plethora, or an Analysis of *Trio A*" and Morris's "Notes on Sculpture, Parts I and II" were both published (in Morris's case, republished) in Gregory Battcock's *Minimal Art: A Critical Anthology* (1968)—a collection that quickly came to stand for the varied discourse as essential to the initial formation of minimalism as the artworks under its banner.¹¹⁸ The differences between ephemeral, embodied performance art and stark, geometric minimalism could easily be cast in gendered terms. So could the competition between the two young artists that Rainer committed to posterity in her memoir ("Either Bob had to get out of my field or I had to get out of his life," she concluded in 1966,

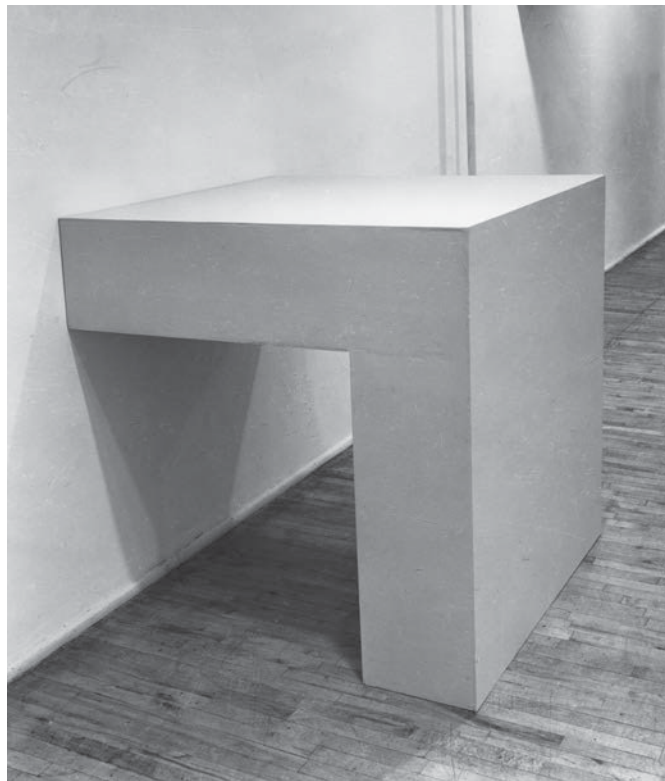


FIGURE 39
Robert Morris, *Untitled (Table)*,
1964. Painted plywood
(destroyed). Installed at the Green
Gallery, New York, December 1964.
Courtesy of Leo Castelli Gallery.

thus ending Morris's performance career), as well as the predictable greater attention given by museums and the art market to minimalist sculpture from 1964 to the present day.¹¹⁹ This chapter treats the early work of both artists as sharing what Rosalind Krauss has called a "parallel . . . sensibility," central to any understanding of the significance literal bodily presence held for midcentury art practice in the United States.¹²⁰ It is particularly concerned with the similarities and differences between the ways their simultaneously emergent versions of minimalism addressed physicality.

Most of the formal qualities that each artist emphasized in imagining the new work of art were quite different, as befit the differences between their preferred media. Where Rainer devoted several paragraphs to "energy distribution" (66), for example, Morris wrote about size and its effects. But the essays intersect in the things Rainer and Morris could not tolerate about the past art forms still dominant in New York. These priorities were consistent with the turn toward the ordinary in which both had participated at Judson during the previous three years. Morris specifically wanted a size for his sculptures that seemed public rather than intimate, for example, but on a human scale, not a monumental one. And the dancer's energy, Rainer believed, should be expended evenly, not explosively, thus suggesting moderate effort as opposed to heroic accomplishment or unlikely ease. Both artists had had enough of impressiveness and grandiosity, of dramatic expression and sweeping gesture. Morris proposed plain, cubic forms such as his *Untitled (Table)*—objects, he claimed, that were "less self-important" (fig. 39).¹²¹ Rainer wanted "a more matter-of-fact, more concrete, more banal quality of physical being in performance . . . [one] in which skill is hard to locate" (65; fig. 40).



FIGURE 40

Peter Moore, performance view of Yvonne Rainer's "Lecture," from the first version of *The Mind is a Muscle*, 1966. Judson Memorial Church, May 24, 1966. Performer: Peter Saul. Yvonne Rainer Papers, Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles.

Morris's rigid, repeatable, geometric, three-dimensional forms—which he referred to as “gestalts”—were meant to emphasize and explore relations between the sculptural object and its surroundings: the built structures, empty space, lighting, and other objects in the room, including the viewer. In giving us so little on the surface to look at, Morris meant for us to call on other kinds of sensation. We are meant to become aware of the large number of variable conditions that affect our encounter with and perception of the sculpture. Walking into his exhibition at the Green Gallery in December 1964, for example, we might have noticed the large plywood structures' dependence upon and similarity to the walls, floor, or ceiling—and found, like Morris, that “one's awareness of oneself existing in the same space as the work is stronger than in previous work” (fig. 41).¹²² Approaching Morris's eight-foot-tall *Column* at the Green Gallery in October 1963, we might, faced with so little surface or compositional detail, have agreed with Morris that “one is more aware than before that he himself is establishing relationships as he apprehends the object from various positions and under varying conditions of light and spatial context” (fig. 42). Some viewers did experience these objects in precisely this way. Critic Lucy Lippard discussed the 1964 Green Gallery exhibition work in terms of its “extension” of the architecture, while Donald Judd noted its “powerful” spatial effects.¹²³

Morris made from everyday hardware store materials (plywood and gray paint) an unspecial object that was so plain, so blank, so devoid itself of material incident, that, viewing it, we are thrown back on ourselves for any sort of awareness of contingent effects. The sculptures were inspired by simple plywood props used in Rainer and Simone Forti's dance performances of the previous three years.¹²⁴ Now empty of dancers, their surfaces become blank screens for a shifting play of shadows, sending us to the basic sensations of our own bodies occupying a particular space. The literalness of minimalist sculpture—its version of the everyday—sits on the far side of recognizability: dull object-hood and base-level physicality are such givens, and so much not what viewers usually

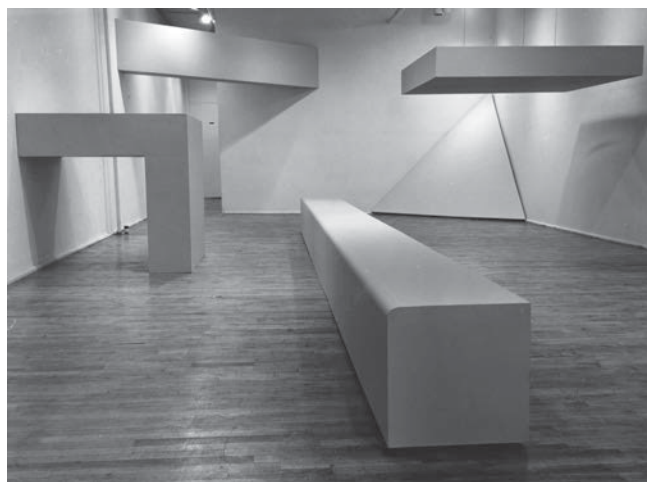


FIGURE 41
Robert Morris, exhibition of sculptures at the Green Gallery, New York, December 1964. Courtesy of Leo Castelli Gallery.

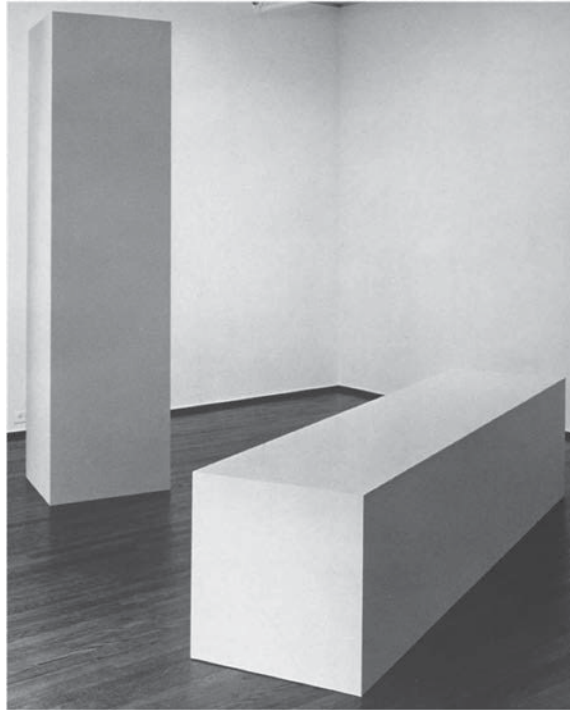


FIGURE 42

Robert Morris, *Two Columns*, 1961.
Painted plywood, height 96 in.
(243.8 cm). Photo by Bruce C.
Jones.

think about, that to notice them is strange and therefore potentially illuminating or transformative. The cubes, beams, and wedges that occupied the gallery during a minimalist exhibition provided structuring focal points around which the viewer's experience of contingency was arranged. It is this potentially boring, perception-oriented ordinariness that I believe we should see Rainer drawing upon in "A Quasi Survey" for its difference from the easily recognized banality of tasks like running and lifting that she had been exploring with the Judson Dance Theater just before this moment.

It adds another set of terms to the dialogue between Rainer and Morris to also connect Morris's minimalist object with sculpture's long tradition of representing the human body, recognizing the ways it functions like an abstracted three-dimensional "figure," situated within a real space that served as its ground.¹²⁵ Michael Fried, for example, famously related to Morris's work more as "surrogate person[s]" than as shapers of architectural space.¹²⁶ And, writing about work by Morris that she lived with on a daily basis, Rainer herself asserted in a 1967 article, "Its flatness and grayness are transposed anthropomorphically into inertness and retreat. Its simplicity becomes 'noncommunicative,' or 'noncommittal.' Its self-containment becomes 'silence.' Its singularity becomes boredom. . . . In front of a Morris I have a reverie; I wait for the object to look back at me, then hold it responsible when it doesn't."¹²⁷

Minimalism's refusal to be expressive or impressive—a refusal, that is, to give us as viewers anything legible or compositionally complex enough that we can temporarily lose

FIGURE 43

Yvonne Rainer, table from "A Quasi Survey of Some Minimalist Tendencies in the Quantitatively Minimal Dance Activity Midst the Plethora," 1966. In *Minimal Art: A Critical Anthology*, edited by Gregory Battcock (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1968).

Objects		Dances
	eliminate or minimize	
1. role of artist's hand		phrasing
2. hierarchical relationship of parts		development and climax
3. texture		variation; rhythm, shape, dynamics
4. figure reference		character
5. illusionism		performance
6. complexity and detail		variety: phrases and the spatial field
7. monumentality		the virtuosic movement feat and the fully-extended body
	substitute	
1. factory fabrication		energy equality and "found" movement
2. unitary forms, modules		equality of parts
3. uninterrupted surface		repetition or discrete events
4. nonreferential forms		neutral performance
5. literalness		task or tasklike activity
6. simplicity		singular action, event, or tone
7. human scale		human scale

ourselves—is one of its most compelling features. It is seductive, this cool lack of engagement, seeming to offer a model for interaction that might solve all of our social anxieties. Minimalism discourages elaborate expression; it asks that we be as self-reliant and self-contained as it is, that we give away no secrets, that we be aware of our position in space, that we be strong like the structures that shape space; it makes us feel we should not ask much from it, and likewise it will not ask much from us—only that we stay conscious of our embodied selves, and demand no escape from those embodied conditions.

It may have been this two-way opening up onto the question of embodied conditions that held Rainer's interest in the minimalist withdrawal of personality, in spite of her frustrated response to Morris's blank sculptures. For her bodily incarnation of minimalism was similarly deadpan. Rainer's dance shared with Morris's geometric objects an emphasis on the body as a dumb, heavy material object, situated in a particular space with other objects and viewers. Yet where Morris depended on viewers to make this observation of themselves, based on a comparison with his sculptures, Rainer conveyed the message using the body itself. It was as if she wanted to take the kind of body that minimalism encouraged its viewers to understand themselves to be, and put it on stage as the performing body. The viewer evoked in Rainer's description of her experience of Morris's art is perhaps given form here: someone in a reverie, waiting to be looked at. Once the members of the audience were looking at her, though, what did they see? What were they made responsible for?

In a two-columned table at the start of her essay, Rainer laid out the similarities between what minimalist dance and minimalist sculpture "eliminate or minimize" in past art forms and then what they offer as a "substitute" (63; fig. 43). The similarities Rainer listed have mostly to do with their "factual quality," or literalness. She focused on the formal features that resulted from a shared effort to avoid illusion, personal style, hierarchy,

and climax. The plain geometric forms in Morris's studio referred not to the artist who made them but, if anything, to "factory fabrication." Rainer's dances, filled with what she called "task or tasklike activity" rather than "phrasing," seemed similarly not made but executed, or even "found."

"A Quasi Survey" put into words Rainer's rejection of the spectacularly skilled performers of traditional ballet and modern dance, channeling their energy into physical movement requiring extraordinary strength and control. Though she had studied ballet and modern dance with passionate commitment, by 1966 Rainer, like Paxton, hated the aesthetic of spectacular virtuosity. She was tired of the structure of climax that its triumphant moves created, the buildup to a frozen moment of suspension, "registering like a photograph," followed by a structurally unimportant "recovery" period (65). She balked also at the defensive-yet-needy relationship to the audience that motivated the climactic moment, revealed in the dancer's attitude of "introversion, narcissism, and self-congratulatoriness" (66). Her essay makes clear that Rainer was not categorically against performing. She valued the kind of focused attention that the performance situation engendered. She just did not like the implication conveyed by the spectacularly skilled performer that a body had to be so extremely impressive to earn such attention and appreciation. We can view "A Quasi Survey" as a description of what everydayness looked like for Rainer by 1966, and as an elaborate explanation of why she had turned to everyday life in the first place as the source for her art's forms.¹²⁸

By "tasklike activity" or "movement-as-task," Rainer meant a type of movement that produced an efficiently working body, one that moved evenly and with purpose (66, 63). It did not over- or under-exert itself. It did not seem to seek to impress. Recall, as cited above, that the dancer was to execute the choreography *in the manner* that one would "get out of a chair, reach for a high shelf, or walk downstairs when one is not in a hurry," yet without directly imitating such everyday activities (67). In the resulting performance mode, to return to the two photographs with which this chapter began (fig. 44; see figs. 14, 15), faces were relaxed. Gazes were vague, often as if the eyes were withdrawn slightly in the head. "A Quasi Survey" lets us know that the dancers of *Trio A* were directed, in fact, never to look out directly at the audience. For Rainer in 1966, access to the performer's eyes was inherently linked to personality. The emphasis was to be, rather than "exhibition of character," on "action," which, so Rainer maintained, "can best be focused on through the submerging of the personality; so that ideally one is not even oneself, one is a neutral 'doer'" (65).

Rainer may have reduced the amount of legible expression in and on the body in her version of ordinary unspectacularness, but her strategy, in contrast to Morris's, was to exert less control over its surface rather than more (fig. 45). Rainer's choreography specified that the dancers not clench and flex every muscle to the maximum (67). It required a dancing body that was considerably less charged than that of a traditional actor or dancer. To work with the living human body as a material is to work with the fact that the body makes countless tiny, illegible movements all of the time—facial twitches,

FIGURE 44

Yvonne Rainer, *Northeast Passing*, 1968. Goddard College, Plainfield, Vt., 1968. Detail of photo by Barry Goldensohn. Yvonne Rainer Papers, Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles.



tension held in the mouth, unconsciously slouched or raised shoulders, and the various postures into which the body falls that reveal its constant relationship with gravity. These unintended passages are not directed toward any communicative act; they do not refer, in other words. They are ill-formed, and they flash over the body's surface and shape whenever the mind stops paying attention to what the body is doing. Traditional choreography has always attempted to erase these movements and postures for the sake of "clarity." A clenched jaw, a jutting forearm, or a foot sloping off its ankle have been insured against by a plastered smile, the even curve of the *port de bras*, and pointed or flexed feet. Expression,

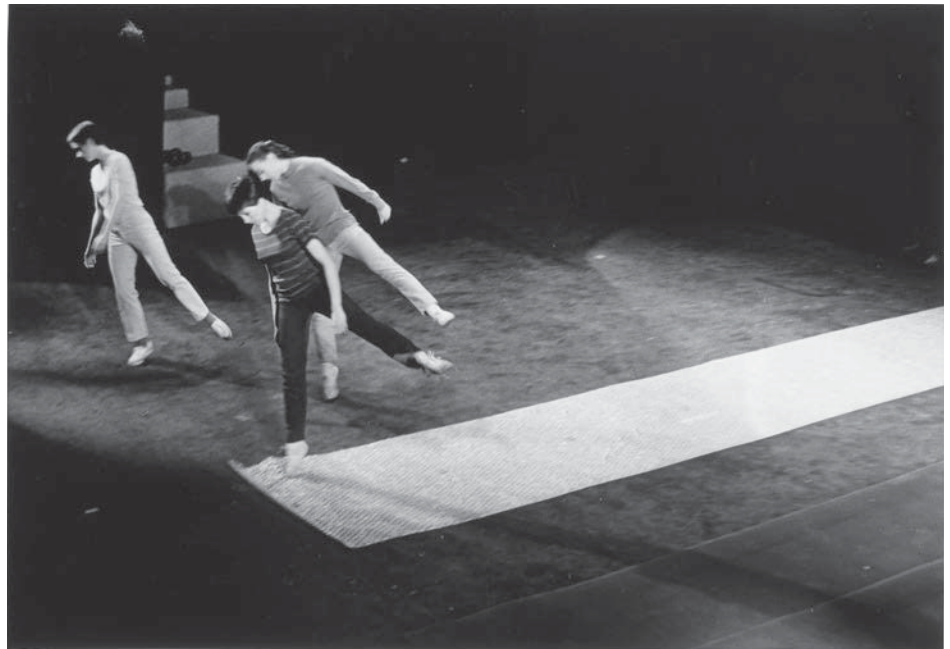
in dance, has been formed by suppressing all that evaded or would detract from that expression's communicative aim.¹²⁹

Rainer's unspectacular task movement—her particular version of the everyday—had nothing to “express” in this traditional sense, and thereby made a space for these incidental, often involuntary effects to appear. She approached the human body as a material with its own unruly physical properties, and the forms she asked her material to take did not prevent those properties from surfacing. We see these incidental effects happening in certain photographs, artificially isolated, but even in performance the audience would have had a sense, when the piece was over, that a lot had happened that was not directly legible, that they had witnessed a texture particular to the moment of performance. In this way Rainer's work is more like a Pollock painting than a Morris sculpture, which downplays materiality, and in which all contingency must arrive from the outside.

This investment in accidental incident belongs to the modernist notion of art that Rainer was steeped in before she joined a movement that saw art as primarily a new space where the everyday would replace the grandiose. A major benefit of the *tasklike* was that it allowed the body to appear as more of a material than did the task. Thus another way of articulating the risk involved in bringing the everyday into art was that it might rule out the material unruliness that has made new formal languages possible at many moments in modernist art's history. When Rainer shifted from the mode of *We Shall Run* to make *Trio A*, she returned to the sensibility that understands the way matter can open and close to the realms of representation and code. After rejecting the comportment of the spastic or insane person and fully immersing her work in the recognizable everyday, she reinjected

FIGURE 45

Peter Moore, performance view of Yvonne Rainer's “Trio B,” from *The Mind Is a Muscle*, 1968. Anderson Theater, New York, 1968. Performers: Barbara Lloyd, Gay Delanghe, and Becky Arnold, on bubble wrap. Yvonne Rainer Papers, Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles.



it with the otherness of the physicality of the body. She developed strategies that put the accidents back into her material. It seems that something subtle, not easily nameable or legible, was required to ensure that her viewer's sensuous engagement be mobilized. Concrete material was yielding a new abstract language.

Clark's work again delivers the best account of this somewhat counterintuitive conceptual-concrete seesaw in modernist art. His writing on Pollock ultimately makes clear that the physical material of art is both immediate and other in the type of sign that it poses—positively grasped and felt, but at the same time negative because displaying qualities that distinguish it from intentional human languages and systems. Rainer's efforts, too, resulted in "a figure of otherness and incommensurability," the live body oddly conveying such a figure—such an abstraction—to stand now for the embodied glue around and within the structures of everyday life.¹³⁰ Less apocalyptic than Pollock's with its "end and beginning of the world quality," Rainer's materiality avoided the huge and the overwhelming.¹³¹ Her 1960s version was not so much "impervious to the mind," as what would align her project with the social practice project that Guy Debord called "the opposite of . . . the society of the spectacle."¹³²

Rainer, like Pollock, turns the immediately present into the illegibly other by emphasizing the physicality of the material. Viewers, of course, will always read the body for any gestures it might make, but in asking performers to let their bodies give in to gravity and to withdraw their personalities and their tried-and-true strategies of direct engagement, Rainer pushes gesture to the limit of legibility. The emphasis on physicality underlines how other from the "as is" body most gesture is, but it also sends us looking for legibility in the spontaneous movements on the surface of the body, or in the way its skeletal structure settles into a position. It sends us searching for what Eve Meltzer might call "motivated" signs, or what Adorno would simply call "expression."¹³³

It is, I hope, clear that Rainer offered a more complex version of physical materiality than minimalism's version of the ordinary-made-abstract. She understood, like Adorno, that the physical substance of artworks—especially modernist artworks, which foregrounded medium to such a dramatic extent—had always offered a more concrete sign than language. In that otherness lay an artwork's special capacity for figuring the violence of modernity, but also for proposing new ways of understanding the world in persuasively concrete terms. One processes art the way one processes an experience. Though one is aware of the artifice and that any effects experienced have been intended by the artist, something still happens to one's body that one has to come to terms with. In this process, possibilities proposed abstractly are grasped in a manner that is not abstract, which often generates further abstract concepts and categories in the form of language. Rainer's somewhat intractable tasklike body enacted a negation, but also offered a positive.

Negation is also found in the defensive, withdrawn, almost autistic person in *Trio A*'s tasklike aesthetic and in one possible line of response to her. She never looks out. She deploys no easily recognizable gestures (such as the quoted material Rainer would use later, alongside the tasklike, in *Spiraling Down* [2008]). As suggested in this chapter's

FIGURE 46

Yvonne Rainer, *Trio A (The Mind is a Muscle, Part I)*, 1966, performed August 14, 1978. Film by Robert Alexander, 16 mm. Photograph of stilled video frame by Elise Archias.



opening, her demeanor raises worried questions: Why would someone behave so defensively? Why so little trust that the audience is there? Why renounce so drastically the pleasures traditionally offered in the exchange between coordinated dancer and appreciative spectator? The short answer would be: the culture made her this way. Pace Debord, it barraged her with hyperexpressive, alienating imagery, and separated her from any reasonably practical or emotional public life by forcing all connection to other members of society to pass through a centralized image-commodity hub.¹³⁴ Rainer can easily seem to perform in *Trio A* from within the isolation that spectacle culture insists upon. Subsequent to this worry, a viewer might respond to the diffidence by herself feeling alienated and possibly annoyed or resentful: Why should we engage with her when she does not even seem to care whether we are here? Importantly, this response also takes viewers into the space of critique. In our resentment is a refusal of the negation inherent in modern conditions—a negation of the richness of embodied communication—that the work mimics. We perceive the symptom of the damage in the performer (her defensiveness) as undesirable in a work of art and perhaps begin to demand artworks that express social desires more clearly and a culture that would support such expression.

Within or through this reading of the tasklike body as damaged and alienating, however, we also come to feel tenderness for it (fig. 46). The version of embodiment on display is ordinary. It is glaringly unvirtuosic and unspectacular. On the heels of our “Why should I care?” moment, we might feel the work of art asking us to recall any other times when we attended—as much as art asks us to attend—to someone doing something ordinary. “What objects in the world is this artwork like?” is a question we always do well to ask of modern sculpture, and it is appropriate for the objects-in-space of performance art too. “How am I relating to it, and when have I related to anything or anyone in this way before?” In this case, the answer might be: When watching a loved one, or a child. Relationships in which the way someone ordinarily moves becomes important are rare.

This is the dialectic in Rainer's minimalist dance. Worry about, alienation from, or resentment toward the damaged, untrusting, withdrawn performer is combined with sensuous engagement with bodily movements too abstract to be legible as gesture. This microcosmic impersonal practice begins to feel something like tenderness for the body of a stranger as if she were an everyday intimate. In this combination, tasklike movement performs a version of modernity's everyday along Lefebvrian lines, acknowledging "ideologies, institutions, culture, language, and constructed and structured activities (including art)" that shape the "unformed" everyday, "but with the proviso that 'human matter' or 'human nature' can only exist dialectically, in the endless conflict between nature and man, between matter and the techniques which wield power over it."¹³⁵ On the one hand, Rainer's work is performatively symptomatic of a culture that has come to lack a shared language around aesthetic experience. On the other, as the answer to its own damaged capacity for expression, the work offers the vulnerability of the ordinary body and the viewer's associations with personal care that such a body calls up. Such work is in accord with Lefebvre's conviction that "only the history of feelings or willpower, only the events they incite or assume responsibility for, only their confrontation with what is 'real' within 'the real'; demonstrate anything." Relating to a work of art the way one relates to one's everyday relations and concerns—confronting real feelings within an artificially constructed form in this way—was part of the 1960s effort to reinvest a public social discourse, the one happening around art, with the same kind of passion and care that viewers had for the private concerns and needs toward which consumer culture relentlessly directed their attention. Such investment was no longer inspired by Graham and Pollock, undergoing in their own distinct ways the ordeal of expressiveness. Graham's body was too disciplined, and Pollock's paint was not enough like the body for either to convincingly stand for everyday life anymore. Schneemann and the Reichians, discussed in the next chapter, were examples of a different approach to the same project.

The goal in Rainer's un-"self-congratulatory" art is not to dissolve the subject (as poststructuralism often urges) into sign systems or drives, but, like the modernists of the earlier part of the twentieth century, to engage in the ongoing human practice of coming to terms with how it feels and what it means to live in a world only partially constructed by ourselves. That practice is revealed by modernist art to be constantly failing and starting again—aware of what makes it impossible, but reaching for the ideal of shareable form the way one reaches again and again for another body.

2 Concretions

Carolee Schneemann

Like the other two artists at the center of this study, Carolee Schneemann focused her work on the everyday materiality of bodies, but in her case that meant first and foremost the materiality of sex. Many in Schneemann's generation felt themselves to be witnessing—if not participating in directly—a sexual revolution. “The great new sin today is no longer giving in to desire,” *Time* magazine reported five months before the first performance of Schneemann's *Meat Joy*, “but not giving in to it fully or successfully enough.”¹ *Meat Joy* plunged head first into the newly messy early 1960s realm of sexual signifiers brought about by rock and roll, *Playboy* magazine, Betty Friedan, and the pill—“all America is one big Orgone Box,” *Time* announced—in which the body might as easily stand for revolution as for teenage romance, a harbinger of liberated sensuality in one minute and selling the latest shaving cream in the next. Schneemann's art gave her audience an opportunity to consider the everydayness of sex—the pleasure of erotic relations being something everyone presumably already has, or potentially has—as something both immediately felt and shot through with systems of codification and control. Her work asked her audience to think about sex as at once a biological “need,” as Henri Lefebvre observed, and biology modified by its “attachment to [a culture's] symbols, images, rituals and ceremonies,” rather than as simply one or the other.²

Meat Joy's score for ten performers staged a series of relations between men and women that aligned the human body with various materials—paint, paper, plastic cellophane, and most famously, raw meat from local butcher shops—to a sound track of collaged pop music and street sounds. It lasted anywhere from sixty to eighty minutes, depending on how its improvised sequences played out. In two photographs from *Meat Joy*'s beginning section, one sees two man-woman pairs (figs. 47 and 48). The half-clothed pair on the left side of both photographs stands upright, like a couple dancing or performing a love scene. The man reaches toward the woman's skirt in the first, and it has dropped by the second, encouraging us to suppose that they are undressing each other. Next to them another pair interacts, but because the woman has a large, amorphous wad of white paper fastened to the front of her nearly naked torso—a costume noticeably unmatched by the man's ordinary sweater and pants—it is much harder to name what they are doing or to identify their relationship in everyday terms. From one image to the next,



FIGURE 47
Carolee Schneemann, *Meat Joy*,
1964. Judson Memorial Church,
November 16, 17, or 18, 1964. Photo
by Al Giese. Carolee Schneemann
Papers, Getty Research Institute,
Los Angeles.

we see the woman with the paper wad lower herself onto the man, but rather than sexually interlocked, the one body looks more beached upon the other, the face of the man on the bottom nearly obscured by this strange, slightly abject barrier to their closeness, requiring them both to use a fair amount of arm strength to prevent her upper body from collapsing onto the paper pile and crushing him entirely. In comparison with the first couple, whose pose resembles a typical image of seduction, it seems difficult for this second pair to know what posture is appropriate. There is no corresponding activity to theirs in the existing image repertoire. They just have to carry out the script, negotiate the paper belly that will inevitably keep their heads farther apart than they would be without it, hear the crunch of the paper, feel the cold, plastic-covered floor against their skin, try not to laugh, try not to get hurt. The interaction through the paper wad is absurd and immediate, in other words, and the contrast this couple poses to the smooth operators next to them suggests that *Meat Joy* will invite its audience to a version of human sensuality that includes awkwardness as much as pleasure in its palette, and that it will navigate both in relation to representations of sexuality from the wider culture.

Like many others in the overlapping 1960s network of artists, musicians, poets, and activists, Schneemann found support for her sociosexual convictions in the writings of



FIGURE 48
Carolee Schneemann, *Meat Joy*,
1964. Judson Memorial Church,
November 16, 17, or 18, 1964. Photo
by Al Giese. Carolee Schneemann
Papers, Getty Research Institute,
Los Angeles.

Wilhelm Reich, the Austrian student of Freud and reader of Marx, credited by some with joining the two, and thereby politicizing psychoanalysis, going beyond the mere passive observation of neurosis on a mass scale to actively cast blame on the society that he felt caused it and proactively seek practical solutions.³ According to Reich, Western culture created a situation in which “biological energy is dammed up, thus becoming the source of all kinds of irrational behavior,” the worst result of this repression being the rise of fascism in Europe during his lifetime. Reich proposed that the therapeutic solution lay in “full and repeated sexual satisfaction,” which was the “reasonable” outgrowth of the human organism’s “natural capacity for love.” This capacity had been badly damaged, but would be restored by peeling back the visibly hampering “character armor . . . binding all energy” in the body.⁴ Reich diagnosed character armor literally in most cases, through symptoms such as muscular stiffness. If the armor could be softened with massage and other techniques to make room for the free flow of “orgone energy,” not only would patients be relieved of their neurotic repression but the larger patriarchal structures that caused that repression would crumble, and Western culture as a whole would come to support the “lawful harmony of natural functions that permeates and governs all being.”⁵ Nature and culture would work in tandem in Reich’s sociosexual utopia, as his friend Bronislaw

Malinowski had shown was possible in the sexually permissive matriarchal societies of the Trobriand Islands in the 1920s.⁶

Reich had salience amongst the leftist avant-garde, but in many ways there was a fine line between his theories and ideas circulating more widely in American popular culture in the 1960s. As Bonnie Traymore has laid out in her research on the long postwar discussion about sex in the United States, the sexual revolution was already mainstream and commodified by 1964.⁷ Alfred Kinsey's studies of human sexual behavior in 1948 and 1953 had made sex and sexual health not only an acceptable but a best-selling topic.⁸ In 1960s mass entertainment, sexuality was represented in various married and unmarried guises, as films and television sitcoms featuring teens on beaches, middle-class married couples, bachelors, and "sexy single girls" proliferated.⁹ The theory of repression put forward by Hugh Hefner in *Playboy* magazine beginning in 1953—"The sexually liberal . . . argue . . . that chastity is just another word for repression; that repression is harmful; that anyone who knowingly inflicts harm on another—including himself—is cruel; and that cruelty is immoral"—and the swinging single lifestyle sold to men and women by *Playboy* and *Cosmopolitan* constituted in many ways a watered-down, extremely profitable version of Reich's society governed by a "lawful harmony of natural functions."¹⁰

Because of this widely available and marketable account of sex in popular culture, not every advocate for progressive social change in the 1960s believed that the sexual revolution was actually transforming much, or that sex could facilitate broader social change. Even the discussions in mainstream magazines suggested that the newly permissible topic of a fulfilling sex life raised more anxieties and questions than simple answers.¹¹ The sexual revolution made men and women vulnerable in a marketplace that defined gender roles much more confidently than they felt within them. Friedan's book *The Feminine Mystique* (1963) stated in no uncertain terms that women's newly revolutionized desire for sexual fulfillment was being used by advertisers to manipulate their habits of consumption and trap them in a cycle of dissatisfaction, painting a grimly pathetic portrait of housewife "sex-seekers" in the suburbs.¹² This current of critique carried forward most notably in Herbert Marcuse's 1964 account of "repressive desublimation" and Michel Foucault's 1976 *History of Sexuality*.¹³ In one passage that addresses Reich directly, for example, Foucault wrote, "The fact that so many things were to change in the sexual behavior of Western societies without any of the promises or political conditions predicted by Reich being realized is sufficient proof that this whole sexual 'revolution,' this whole 'antirepressive' struggle, represented nothing more, but nothing less—and its importance is undeniable—than a tactical shift and reversal in the great deployment of sexuality."¹⁴ In Foucault's analysis, Western culture, beginning from the late eighteenth century, has effectively produced sexuality as something constitutive of the modern subject, and thus as something it manages and polices via various medical, juridical, and ideological practices and institutions. Antirepression advocates like Reich could not but fail to alter these configurations, according to Foucault, so long as they were still looking to "sex—that agency . . . which seems to

underlie all that we are . . . and that we ask to reveal what we are and to free us from what defines us,” rather than outside the limits of sex’s many discourses, to what Foucault calls simply “bodies and pleasures” or “bodies and their materiality, their forces, energies, sensations, and pleasures”—that which power has a “grip on,” but which themselves also have the capacity to “counter the grips of power.”¹⁵ For Foucault, in other words, one should have sex, not have a sexuality. Foucault’s investment in “the thought from outside,” in spaces and experiences beyond the limits of culture, lets us know that for him the materiality of the body is not part of the everyday, but exists at a remove.¹⁶ In this his perspective is crucially different from the perspective suggested by the artworks discussed in this book.

Schneemann inserted *Meat Joy*—her most overtly erotic performance work from the 1960s—into this discussion about the political realities that sex makes visible and the social potential it promises. Though *Meat Joy* communicates in an inherently different way than do the theoretical texts of Reich and Foucault, it shares in certain of their key abstract ideas. The state of sexual health to which Reich’s ideal society aspired was deeply linked to the promise of involuntary movement or a “*complete discharge of all dammed-up sexual excitation through involuntary contractions of the body*.”¹⁷ Similarly, someone undergoing Reichian therapy (which Schneemann did not do herself, but which she heard described in accounts from a friend) was guided through breathing exercises designed to eventually produce involuntary contractions in the body.¹⁸ Involuntary movement also played a central structuring role in the score for *Meat Joy*, placing its performers’ bare skin in contact with various rough, cold, or slimy materials, and in the technique Schneemann used to direct her performers, which involved several weeks of exercises that trained them to react to each other openly, spontaneously, and physically more than verbally.

Yet the resultant work is very different from a collective orgasmic release. *Meat Joy* was interlaced with the more widely available cultural codes for sex—the dancing/undressing couple discussed above, young women in bikinis, candy-coated pop songs, and leggy, Busby Berkeley-style choreography, to name a few. It is thus tempting to read Schneemann’s work as a demonstration of “sex” as Foucault understood it. Sex, that is, as a seductive but constraining cultural construct, disrupted periodically by “bodies and pleasures.” But this reading would deny the optimistic, participatory spirit in which the codes are adopted in *Meat Joy*, and it would deny the sense of uncertainty and limitation given form by passages like the maneuvering around the paper wad described above. So too, any attempt to claim that *Meat Joy*’s bodies and pleasures, like those that Foucault offered as a critical alternative, hail from or allude to a place outside culture would deny her Reichian confidence that through work—through practice—nature and culture can be made compatible.

Schneemann, like Reich, was a modernist. Her concern was with both the concrete and immediate body that Foucault championed, the body of immediate sensation and pleasure, and the body that suffers and revels in the mundane codes of popular culture. Both were part of everyday life. In this regard, her understanding of the body’s responsive but clunky physicality—beached on a mound or straining to lift its weight up from the

floor—was derived first and foremost from her modernist engagement with the possibilities and intransigencies of paint. The fact that *Meat Joy*—much more than her lyrical film *Fuses* (1964–67)—highlights the clash between culturally available intimations of sexual experience and a flinching, laughing, often vulnerable everyday body is the basis of its expressive value as art and the cornerstone of its critique. An insistence on the immediate sensation and pleasure of embodiment from within culture, rather than outside in some unspecified area of nature, is the foundation of *Meat Joy*'s modernist insight as it tries to articulate the freedom from alienated everyday life that sexual revolution promises.

This modernist view of embodiment informed Schneemann's later feminism, the framework through which first she, and then many critics and scholars after her, subsequently came to interpret her early work.¹⁹ Grasping the modernist insights of her performances from the early 1960s allows a sense of her later political project as more than a defense of the denigrated category of the feminine to emerge.²⁰ Like most of the artists who emerged as feminist in the 1970s, Schneemann became increasingly angry at the sexist treatment she received from the art world, sexism that, from Schneemann's Reichian perspective, was connected to the fearful relation to embodiment that had persisted in American and European culture in her lifetime. She would become more indignant in the 1970s and '80s as her work was denied the space it deserved in high-profile exhibitions because she was not a member, as she put it in 1979, of the "Art Stud Club."²¹ More and more frequently during these years she came to claim the use of her own body as a distinctly female way of making art, an argument that contributed to her becoming part of the feminist art historical canon. Yet the artwork she produced to articulate her views appears consistently grounded in the modernist desire for a system of thought that does not require exclusive binaries to operate.²² Though by 1977 she saw that "the 'sexual liberation' of the '60's was elaborated in the media as a self-serving pleasure principle abjuring the difficult work of analyzing the surrounding social and political issues," she, like Lefebvre, would not give sex up to the market.²³ Sex remained an aesthetic and political subject in her work, sometimes explicitly, as in *Sexual Parameters* (1971)—a chartlike accounting drawn from a survey of forty women of the distinctive lovemaking style of each woman's current lover—but in other works only abstractly suggested by a gesture or image replete with other associations, as in her endurance performance installation *Up To and Including Her Limits* (1973–77), in which she swung naked from a harness and drew on three surrounding walls and the floor for many hours at a time.

Schneemann's most well known performance from the 1970s, *Interior Scroll* (1975 and 1977), figures her feminist views and the complex account of embodiment that motivated its sense of injustice clearly, with Schneemann playing the part of the classical nude who is also an artist, painting her own body and speaking her frustration with the belittling expectation heaved upon her by a male "structuralist film maker" that her work will be bodily and pleasurable but have nothing conceptually substantive to say.²⁴ What makes her feminist complaint more than pro forma is that she reads it from a slender roll

of paper drawn directly from her vagina, the organ that has determined her discursive confinement. The text she reads proceeds to skewer the dispassionate, unaffecting work of her imagined interlocutor as it leaves her alone to mull her own to-do list. Thus in both the meaning of her words and her manner of reciting them, Schneemann insists with *Interior Scroll* that for any artwork's conceptual framework to matter enough to realize art's social potential, it must make take the body into account.

The mobilization of bodily physicality and the choice of external props in *Interior Scroll* are much more symbolically and conceptually legible than *Meat Joy*'s improvised navigation of abrasive paper and slimy meat, and the erotic pleasure the solo performer takes in her own body is much more subdued. Yet we need to see that a modernist conviction formed the basis for *Interior Scroll*'s critique as much as *Meat Joy*'s. That conviction, in a nutshell, was that the exercise of sensuous being in dialectical relation with the structures of a culture was and should be possible for everyone, and that such sensuous appropriation had been threatened by the increased rationalization and exploitation of everyday life in modernity. The "structuralist film maker" in the scroll's story doesn't get this, whereas the feminist does. Modernist subjects operated within gender confines, of course, but those who grasped the potential of the secular, practice-oriented modernist worldview—such as Georgia O'Keeffe, Eva Hesse, even Auguste Rodin in his moment, as Anne Wagner has shown—worked with the idea that the larger goal, the greater and more compelling challenge, lay in engagement with others in their particularity, not only as representatives from specified identity categories; indeed, such categories were usually shown by modernist artists to be hopelessly, liberatingly unstable.²⁵ Embodiment when figured as an abstraction promised universal access, whether the artist figuring it lived in accordance with that political ideal personally or not. Schneemann's generation drew a material sense of what was socially possible—a sense that bodies could and should make demands on the structures that contain them—from the aspirational modernist thought of such figures as Marx and Reich, Cézanne and O'Keeffe, Martin Luther King and Rosa Parks, and we can see the demands that did so much to change the social landscape of Europe and the United States in the 1960s and '70s as powered by their refusal to accept anything less.

SEX AS PRINCIPLE

Reich's work came into Schneemann's life in 1961 or 1962, after her partner, James Tenney, an experimental composer, took a position at Bell Labs in 1961, moving into an office down the hall from the psychologist and musician Sheridan Speeth, a Reichian and pro-Cuba, antiwar activist.²⁶ Speeth gave Tenney and Schneemann a copy of Reich's *Selected Writings*. One of Schneemann's earliest mentions of Reich in her correspondence was in a letter from 1962 to the French artist and impresario Jean-Jacques Lebel.²⁷ Schneemann had met Lebel in 1962 in New York when they both performed in Claes Oldenburg's *Store Days I*, part of Oldenburg's Ray Gun Theatre series at the Judson Church.²⁸ Sometime in

late 1963 or early 1964, Lebel invited Schneemann to do a happening for his Festival of Free Expression in Paris, scheduled for the end of May. In February 1964 she wrote to Lebel of her plans for a work called *Meat Joy*, promising something that was to be related to Antonin Artaud, Michael McClure, and French butcher shops, featuring “carcass as paint (it dripped right through [Chaim] Soutine’s floor) . . . flesh jubilation . . . extremes of this sense. [. . .] Smell, feel of meat . . . chickens, fish, sausages? I see several women whose gestures develop from tactile, bodily relationship to individual men and a mass of meat slices. Specific sequence of collision and embrace . . . a rising, falling counterpoint to bodies.”²⁹ In this early formulation of the work, Schneemann alluded to sex by way of suggestive materials (raw meat) and choreography (collisions and embraces, risings and fallings). Sex would be woven into the larger arrangement of the work of art as one meaning among many, derivable from a variety of concrete gestures. Situated in this way, sex was not so different from the penis in her 1957 painting of Tenney, its state of arousal cast as only one brightly colored, fluid set of strokes among many (fig. 49).

Months later, after realizing the piece at the festival on May 30, Schneemann wrote a telegram to Tenney in which she fastened the sexual allusions in her account of *Meat Joy* to her particular relationship with him: “BEAUTIFUL FRIENZY WILD MEAT JOY TRIUMPH / OUR LOVE COVERS PARIS.”³⁰ The happening’s untamed but inviting frenzy was now understood to stand for not only a generalized sensuality but also a long-standing everyday practice—“our love, our life, like a buried nervous system,” she would write to him again, later the same night.³¹

Only after she had digested the audience’s responses for a few days, on June 3, did Schneemann’s language begin to refer directly to the sexual in *Meat Joy* in psychopolitical terms, as she claimed the erotic material in the work that was embraced by some and

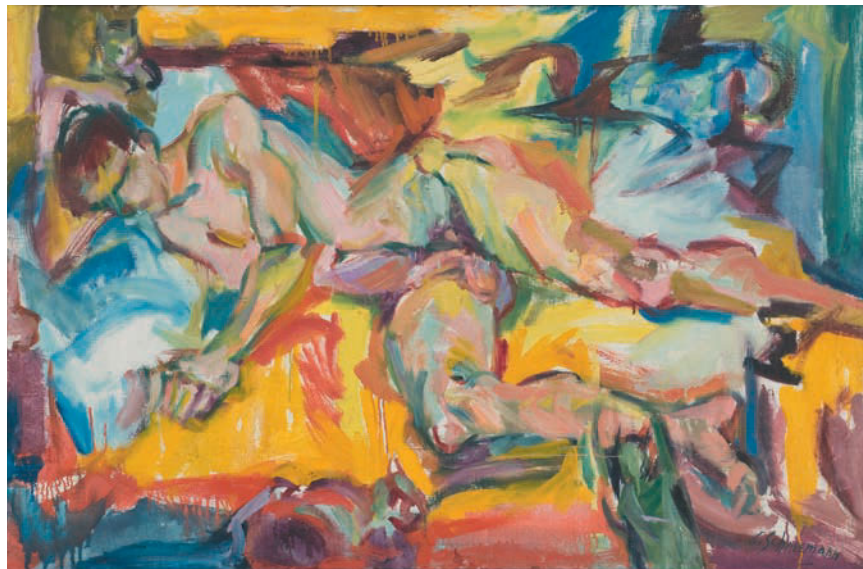


FIGURE 49
Carolee Schneemann, *Personae: JT and Three Kitch's*, 1957. Oil on canvas, 31 × 48 in. (78.7 × 121.9 cm).
Courtesy C. Schneemann and P.P.O.W. Gallery, New York.

rejected by others to be fully what her audience “needed”: “I seem to carry in my presence and to have ‘exploded’ in *Meat Joy* an energy, an intensity of psychic proportion which is *needed* here! [. . .]. . . There was a great deal of *disgust*, outrage and upset in reaction to the piece—as there is also to me by some people. But it has been like a bright, vivid sexual light in which eyes could open or as Jocelyn de Noblet says: ‘The French begin always with the mouth—you have given the body a chance to follow.’ They began with the *eyes* though and the body followed.”³² This first passionate, testy response from her audience at the beginning of her career provided Schneemann with what she called “clarity,” which would give her a lasting sense of purpose, determining the shape of her work and statements for many years to come. Looking back on her early performances ten years later in 1974, for example, she explained the reasons for her erotic work in political terms. “Steeped in the writings of Wilhelm Reich,” she aimed “to break into the taboos against the vitality of the naked body in movement, to eroticize my guilt-ridden culture and further to confound this culture’s sexual rigidities—that the life of the body is more *variously* expressive than a sex-negative society can admit.”³³ Indeed, terms like “rigidities” and “sex-negative” were taken directly from the vocabulary Reich used to describe the effects on the human body of a culture that worked in opposition to natural sexual “functioning,” and they appeared in the writings of a generation of psychologists and cultural critics on the left in the 1960s.³⁴

Based on Schneemann’s notes and letters, Reich’s appeal for her lay, as for so many of his followers, in his identification of sexual repression as a major social problem. It was an “Emotional Plague,” as one Reich follower and defender put it, a truly unnecessary and destructive area of self-censorship “created by the suppression of genital love on a mass scale.”³⁵ The most Reichian moments in Schneemann’s reflections emerged in her thinking about her audience. “Sexual damming is expressive damning,” she concluded in 1963, explaining, “How they fear sensation, pleasure; starvation drives them to an embrace which is a shadow to expression they repress. When I said LOVE I meant EROTIC love; deep transforming bounty one imparts to another reciprocally. . . . These women are fastidious: the living beast of their flesh embarrasses them; they are trained to shame . . . blood, mucus, juices, odors of their flesh fill them with fear.”³⁶ Schneemann looked out to her public and felt critical of what she saw, but as a Reichian, she was nevertheless always optimistic that social change was possible, that it was already under way in the cultural resources available at the time.³⁷ “Our task,” Alexander Lowen pronounced on behalf of his generation of psychotherapists, “is to understand human nature and to influence cultural patterns so that they favor this nature.”³⁸ *Meat Joy* was such an effort to influence cultural patterns, its version of modernist practice noteworthy for its Reichian embrace of existing cultural forms, as if the culture were already a good ways along in the process of transformation. Journaling on her typewriter in 1968 about “how lonely it can be” to be seen as “a monster of sensuality and unbridled lust,” Schneemann wrote about rock-and-roll music, “I’m so glad so glad so glad so glad rock helps us all and goes right in everybody moving a start.”³⁹

An attitude in Reichian therapy that also resonated with Schneemann’s approach

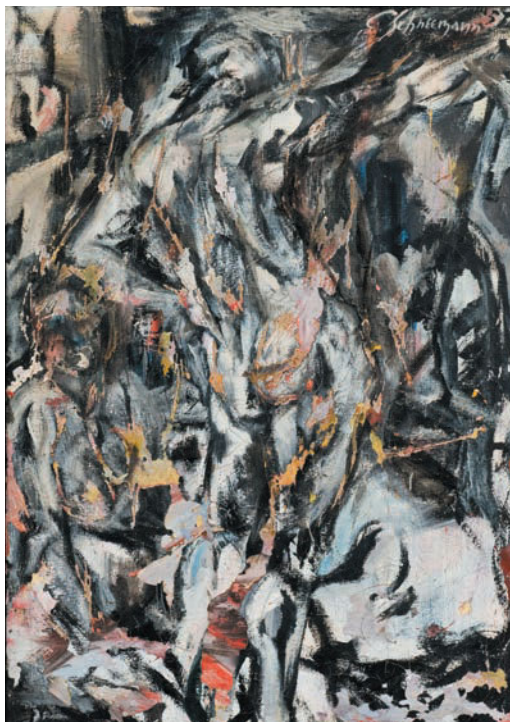
to her work was the one that confidently apprehends the emotional wreckage in a person directly on the surface of the body—in its shape, carriage, and gestures. Lowen, the student of Reich who invented the branch of therapy called “bioenergetics,” sums up this position in 1965, when explaining why he embraced Reich’s notion of “character structure”: “The way a person holds his body and moves it tells us as much about his personality as what he says, often more.”⁴⁰ Agreeing with this, Schneemann could write in 1963 of her students that she “saw immediately facing the individuals in a class what their chance for expressive work was and its direct relationship to their social/sexual and emotional life.”⁴¹ Or writing to Tenney from Paris in 1964, she observed, “I don’t see greater ‘joie’ here at all. . . . That love is rare—among couples I meet here. . . . There is rarely a strong tenderness and free appreciation for one another.”⁴² Similarly, in 1966, while complaining poetically about “these Americans / hard, stiff, cold, repressed,” she made the Reichian observation, “Cut off in their emotion their relation to materials, objects and each other become brittle; . . . They are hot or cold—they do not stream in their flesh. . . . So bewildered are they as to what essence is in them.”⁴³ Nevertheless, in assembling the cast of *Meat Joy* from strangers she encountered in Paris cafés, Schneemann was still confident she could “select performers from a crowd with a cunning loving instinct.”⁴⁴

This confidence in the legibility of the body had informed Schneemann’s design for her 1962 performance work in New York, *Glass Environment for Sound and Motion*. This performance held to Reichian principles in that it was meant to isolate, intensify, and showcase particular physical qualities of her performers and their expressive connotations. Judy Ratner, who played the role of the “clown ballerina,” was to be “small, round, compact,” which Schneemann understood to convey “innocence and efficiency of temperament.”⁴⁵ Meanwhile, Yvonne Rainer, the “seismograph,” was to offer physical “strength” and “pressure inwards,” and thus convey a “severity,” “not to be ‘pleasing.’”⁴⁶ Reich offered a system for making the particular qualities of the physical body legible and communicable.

Finally, underlying the confidence in the transparency of the physical body to emotional-sexual life was a positivist emphasis on the concrete—what Reich sometimes referred to as the “vegetative system”⁴⁷ or “the bioenergetic function of excitability and motility of living substance.”⁴⁸ This is the third, more general, aspect of Reich’s approach that one finds running through Schneemann’s understanding of her early work. She had this in common with intellectual historian Paul Robinson, whose interest in Reich’s theories in the 1960s revolved, in part, around their internalization of the “critical implications” of Freud’s “materialistic concept of psychic energy.”⁴⁹ In keeping with this line of thinking about Reich is one of the few direct quotations from Reich’s writings that appeared in Schneemann’s notes, which Pierre Restany remembers her to have also worked into the sound track for *Meat Joy* in Paris: “The human mind is only an executive organ of investigating, living plasma feeling out its environment.”⁵⁰ Such an emphasis on the body’s brainless material processes suited Schneemann’s modernist investment in the translation of physical sensation into shareable concrete form.

FIGURE 50

Carolee Schneemann, *Three Figures after Pontormo*, 1957. Oil on canvas, 46½ × 31½ in. (118.1 × 80 cm). Courtesy C. Schneemann and P.P.O.W. Gallery, New York.



A MATERIAL'S GESTURE

Schneemann was born on October 12, 1939, in Fox Chase, Pennsylvania, where she was raised by her mother, a full-time supporter of the family, and father, a rural physician. She studied painting and other subjects at Bard College and Columbia University in New York and then went on to earn her MFA in painting from the University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign in 1962 (fig. 50). From the beginning of her writings as an artist, Schneemann understood herself to be especially attuned to physical sensation and to paintings that seemed to share a similar sensitivity. The “rigor of the action of paint in space was nowhere more demanding than in [Cézanne’s] works,” she wrote in 1963, for example.⁵¹ Modernism was a language with signs that could stand for unformed matter, for the concrete in its most general sense as it was perceived by an equally concrete body. Immediately sensuous paintings effectively stood for a passionately sensitive living, as far as Schneemann was concerned, but it was an immediacy that acted within the world. For example, in the same note from 1963 she wrote, “Always the natural world was intoxication, giving my senses information which freed emotions for personal relationships which might one day have the rich wheeling of unpredictable qualities”; but, she added, her sense of her “own physical life and of making things within the life were always united.”

Schneemann spent the late 1950s and very early 1960s making lush, loose, color-saturated paintings and assemblages, which she called “painting constructions.” She felt the aims laid out in the paintings continued in the performance works she began producing

in 1962, after coming to the conclusion that “painting is ‘dead’ ”—too trapped in its own abstract space to meet the current art audience’s need for a more everyday, lifelike, encompassing form of immediacy.⁵² She called her performances “concretions”—concretions of sensation, agglomerates of material and ideas whose connections were felt into being by the artist.⁵³ Here, we might compare Schneemann’s conception of her work to Allan Kaprow’s call in 1958 for an art that would follow the logic of Jackson Pollock’s large, action-filled canvases and actually extend right out into the viewer’s physical space. Yet the experience of the performance, when Schneemann talks about it, was not to be radically different from the experience artists and audiences used to have in the making and viewing of paintings. Addressing both her “painting-constructions” and “concretions,” she wrote as early as 1960, “the body is in the eye, sensations received visually take hold in the total organism.” Ever Reichian, she added, “Insight is a result of sensation’s creative action on our capacity to experience and discover functional connections.” The body was one material among many, she explained in a 1963 essay: “The fundamental life of any material I use is concretized in that material’s gesture. . . . Performers or glass, fabric, wood . . . all are potent as variable gesture units.”⁵⁴ Her art practice mobilized these various materials in pursuit of a sensuous immediacy that would “put to question . . . correspondences we have already discovered between what we deeply feel and how our expressive life finds structure.” Her intent was to destabilize herself and her viewer through sensual overload, to “cast [the total sensibility] almost in stress.” Doing so would put the owner of that sensibility in closer touch with the more impersonal, physical aspects of her being and self-understanding.

The fundamental value of the concrete as a category, Schneemann argued in an early note, was that it gave rise to the promise of a “sensibility that feels it always has to risk its own self definition to grasp its own intentions in materials.”⁵⁵ What was at issue was “not about the ‘self,’ ” she insisted in arch modernist fashion; “it’s about what the materials can do. It’s about these forms.” The hope expressed here of generating new forms from matter—rather than from language or image or self, and rather than stepping outside of form altogether—is one Schneemann shared with an entire network of modernist artists extending back at least to the nineteenth-century Impressionists. It is also what distinguishes her from postmodernism’s identity politics and its anti-identity flip side best articulated by Foucault. For Schneemann, the everyday duality of sex as nature and culture, the political critique of a repressive society, and art as the concretization of sensation within legible structures in order to produce surprising new forms for an audience in the present—these were all compatible within the same art practice.

What did the products of such a practice look like? How did Schneemann concretize the Reichian dream of a world in which awareness of sensuous, specifically sexual experience would meet and determine cultural patterns? An examination of her early painting constructions reveals her formulation of this relation at its most abstract and schematic, manifested in her approach to her materials, both painterly and “everyday,” before the latter included performing bodies. The painted forms in *Quarry Transposed* (*Central Park in*



FIGURE 51

Carolee Schneemann, *Quarry Transposed (Central Park in the Dark)*, 1960. Oil paint, wood strips, photograph of N.L., red glass pitcher, nails, wire, and paper on Masonite panels, 57 × 34 × 4 in. (144.8 × 86.4 × 10.2 cm). Private collection. Courtesy C.Schneemann and P.P.O.W Gallery, New York.

the Dark), for example, do not obviously refer to objects in the world (fig. 51). Many of them court “the look of accident,” to quote Greenberg discussing Pollock in 1967, which is to say they suggest they might have ended up on her canvas unintentionally.⁵⁶

On an obvious level, *Quarry Transposed* displays drips, places where paint has been allowed to just do what it does as it falls onto a vertical surface—rolling downward in the bottom, right of center, for example. But looking further, we can say that, in general, paint on Schneemann’s canvas has not been subject to particularly forceful manipulation; that is, by manipulation that makes it act or look like something other than what it is. Such control of paint’s own material inclinations requires great skill. Colors stay separate from one another. There are many wide, smeared strokes of unblended white. Thick, bulging ridges remember the fluidity that made their form possible before the paint had dried. The drip comes to us as only one example from an array of events in paint that also includes broad, grooved strokes with a dry brush and a quick horizontal back-and-forth scrape. Letting the materials “show” in this modernist way was meant to supply the artwork with the sense of what those materials were like before any human came on the scene to manipulate them. The painting is a record of the artist’s encounter with the materiality of paint, and the relation in this example has been a permissive one, interested in what paint looks like when minimally handled. It offers forms determined as much by paint’s laws as by human ones, and leaves it for viewers to judge those forms’ capacity for communication.

However, Schneemann pursued this interest in materiality to different ends than an Abstract Expressionist painter would have. A painting by Pollock such as *Full Fathom Five* (1947), for example, finds support in the tension between illusion and literal material and between figuration and abstraction (fig. 52). The thick buildup of marks on the surface of *Full Fathom Five* is challenged by the sense that the painting portrays great depths. The cool web of lines that seem at first to have “been freed at last from the job of describing contours and bounding shapes,” to use Michael Fried’s formulation, are haunted by the shadowy outline of a figure lurking among them.⁵⁷

Though Schneemann included two perfect, illusory spheres in her composition, and the squarish portal in the bottom center suggests something like a way in to the painting, tension for the most part in *Quarry Transposed* is between paint and literal objects. Thus what separates *Quarry Transposed* most starkly from the paintings by Schneemann’s Abstract Expressionist predecessors are the various large everyday objects within the composition: the broken glass cup and the wire it hangs from, the photograph of an adolescent girl in a bathing suit, the pieces of wood creating frames within the frame. *Full Fathom Five* contains objects, too: nails, coins, cigarette butts, a key—but they are hard to see. Nearly obscured by the dark paint, they function primarily to give the surface texture, and once we know about them, they add to the painting’s secrecy and mystery. We hunt for them, usually fruitlessly. In the Schneemann, the swirling eddies of paint surround and hold the objects, spreading across their boundaries, but the things are large enough and

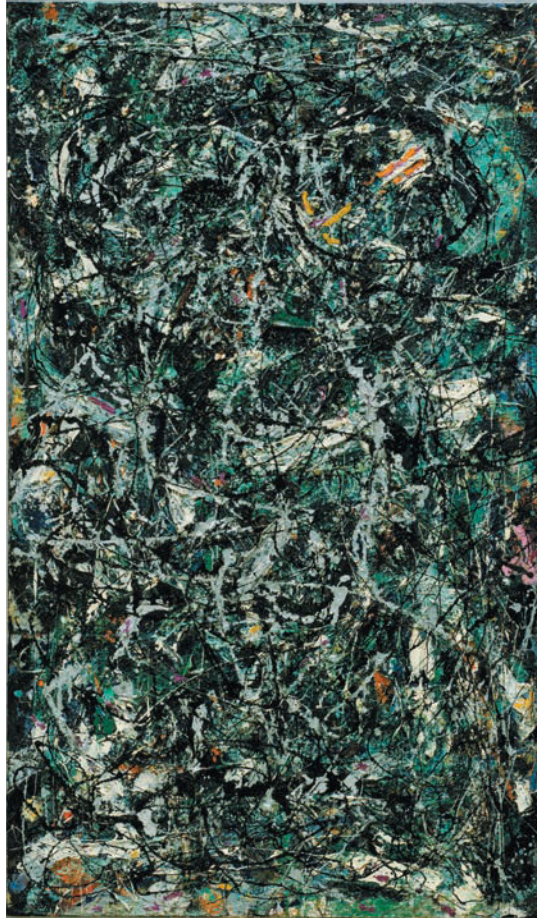


FIGURE 52
Jackson Pollock, *Full Fathom Five*,
1947. Oil on canvas with nails,
tacks, buttons, key, coins, ciga-
rettes, matches, etc., 50 $\frac{7}{8}$ ×
30 $\frac{1}{8}$ in. (129.2 × 76.5 cm). Museum
of Modern Art. Gift of Peggy
Guggenheim.

uncovered enough to retain their identities, their sense of belonging to a separate world of use and passing time.

Such an approach was part of what MoMA curator William Seitz called in 1961 “the poetry of assemblage”—or what Schneemann herself called “collage sensibility”—in which variously significant materials and gestures collide in dramatic ways, creating new forms in the fallout.⁵⁸ But it was also different. In contrast to assemblages from the period by other artists, the objects in *Quarry Transposed* do not jarringly resist and negate their painted environs in proto-postmodern fashion. For example, Schneemann’s collages were different from Jim Dine’s “tool” pictures, such as *Lawnmower* (1962), in which a full-size push mower sits propped against a crown of green and yellow strokes of “lawn.”⁵⁹ Nor do inert objects impose the commodity’s logic of separateness and repetition onto once-expressive painted strokes, the way they do in *Fool’s House* by Jasper Johns (fig. 53). In Schneemann’s painting, objects and painted strokes are imbued with complementary significance. Her work comes closest perhaps to a work by Robert Rauschenberg such as *Collection*, in which paint and objects similarly share the space of the picture with equal



FIGURE 53
Jasper Johns, *Fool's House*, 1962.
Oil on canvas with broom, sculp-
metal, towel, stretcher, and
cup. 72 × 36 × 4½ in. (182.9 × 91.4 ×
11.4 cm). Collection of Jean-
Christophe Castelli, on loan to the
Walker Art Center, Minneapolis,
2015.



FIGURE 54
Robert Rauschenberg, *Collection*,
1954–55. Oil, paper, fabric, wood,
and metal on canvas, 80 × 96 ×
3½ in. (203.2 × 243.8 × 8.9 cm). San
Francisco Museum of Modern Art,
gift of Harry W. and Mary Margaret
Anderson.

weight (fig. 54). Yet Rauschenberg, like Johns, uses painted marks as signs for the history of painting in the manner of the trickster or melancholic—a technique expertly demonstrated, but with enough repetition that as a language it rings hollow. Schneemann more earnestly participates in the tradition, holding on to the techniques and pleasures that she judges worth saving, and is less bound up with the period's postmodern obsession with the contradictions between the pretensions of high art and the lived reality of mass culture.

Schneemann's painting practice brought everyday objects and the materiality of paint together, then, in a dialogue that emphasized their shared physicality but left their distinctness from each other intact. Her priority seems to have been to present clearly this opposition between the stuff of art and the stuff of the everyday world—to allow it to be unquestionably present—but then to make the tension less acute, less of a concern. Accident in paint allowed Schneemann to place the unformed and unintended into inter-course with the familiar and the known. The known forms make the swirling abstract painting a little less severe and serious than it would be without them and the unknown makes the known a little less frivolous and positivistic, a little less like a mere *objet trouvé*.

One central effect of Schneemann's use of collage is a painting that is disjointed in terms of scale. *Quarry Transposed*, as mentioned, contains passages that create the

illusion of three-dimensional space. Next to the two perfect spheres in the upper half of the composition, for example, the literal paint smears begin to look atmospheric—like clouds and wind in the center region swirling around a cosmic body, or black depths in the upper right. But such illusory spaces are discontinuous with the sense of scale created by the photograph and its mandorla of paint, and both of these are discontinuous with the sense of scale created by the glass cup. The tension between abstraction and figuration—a trope or tradition that Schneemann, still an MFA student in 1960, could expertly cite—this tension pushes and pulls against the everyday objects, creating a set of disjointed spaces, which nevertheless do cohere compositionally. The canvas as a whole is balanced and dynamic. The assemblage aesthetic, here, is able to subsume modernist dialectical materiality—and its different, older sort of structuring devices—within its collection. In *Quarry Transposed*, then, Schneemann stages a compatible intertwining of the materiality of things and the materiality of paint, the materiality of representation and the materiality of that represented. Her concern with such transpositions did not change when she turned, just a couple of years later, to works that included live, performing bodies as a primary artistic material.

A DANCER'S DIMENSIONS

How did Schneemann understand the body as a material, when she made it central to her practice in 1962? Was the body like the cup in *Quarry Transposed*, a bit of non-art, taken from the real world and brought into the space of art, or was it like the paint—physical,



FIGURE 55
Peter Moore, performance view
of Lucinda Childs's *Carnation*,
1964. Judson Memorial Church,
New York.

lively and inert, immediate, changing, and responsive? It was both, of course, but Schneemann's performance work was special—different from the less corporeal, more image-based body in, for example, Lucinda Childs's hilariously deadpan *Carnation* (fig. 55) at the Judson Church with its stone-faced Surrealist mannequin adorning herself with household objects, or in Kaprow's less feminist happening *The Courtyard*, discussed in the introduction (see fig. 12). Schneemann was able, particularly by the time she made *Meat Joy* in 1964, to present bodies at the extremes of the code-versus-concrete-substance dyad: in one moment mundanely recognizable, in the next ambiguous and hard to read. What made her enterprise compelling was that it was never reducible to a simple nature/culture, sex/sexuality opposition.

The bodies Schneemann first brought into her work in New York were dancers' bodies. Through Tenney she met composer Philip Corner, whose ties in the New York art community extended to Fluxus and, via his interest in Cage, to the Judson Dance Workshop. There Schneemann presented several of her own group works, using other members of the workshop as performers.⁶⁰ Schneemann did not have the personal experience studying ballet and modern dance that provoked the revisions and refusals of those traditions in the work of such Judson dancers as Rainer, Trisha Brown, and Steve Paxton. But she quickly grasped the significance of that training in the traces it left in the bodies of the dancers themselves, and like Rainer and Paxton, she designed pieces that worked against it. Experimentally minded as they could be, the dancers in the Judson workshop nevertheless displayed habits of comportment and interaction that Schneemann found conservative. In a short piece of writing from 1963 called "What Is a Dancer?" she noted some of her observations about the group, which she elsewhere called her "palette."⁶¹ "A dancer," Schneemann wrote,

has dirty feet, a dancer has poor little tight pants—ankles and feet are sticking out; a tight little top—wrists and hands and neck sticking out. . . . sweat beads across the forehead, a cheek muscle twitching.

A dancer bends, ass covered taut in stretch nylon; neatly folded balls and prick, sculptural breast mounds, pussy humps. They used to be encased in black . . . then pink, white . . . rainbow dyes until their second skins became stenciled, decorated like wallpaper with toes, fingers and head escaping flesh shards.⁶²

Schneemann expresses sympathy in this passage for bits of unhampered flesh squeezing out of a tight nylon container; she seems to lament the transformation of soft, dangling breasts and genitals into hard, spherical objects molded tightly to the torso, noting, as if championing, involuntary sweat beads and a twitch of the cheek, signs of a body under stress, its generosity contained.

Schneemann's sense of constraint extended beyond the boundaries of the dancers' bodies to include the ways they related to the surrounding environment: "Their eyes reached into space without touching it. They were alone. The distance between 'art' and

life. Space was anchored in their bodies, space was where they felt their spines. They didn't realize a radiator behind them equaled their mass, asserted verticals against their legs. . . . a dancer is Visual Element moving in actual real specific dimensions." In other words, Schneemann objected to the dancers' inability to turn their bodily focus outward. In keeping with ballet training, their movement seemed always derived from an inner sense of alignment, based on the structure of the spine. She wanted them to move in response to their environment, to somehow feel the relations of similarity and difference that she saw between their bodies and the lines and objects around them. It was a vision of responsiveness that came out of her painting practice. *Quarry Transposed*, with its drips, had allowed paint to respond freely to the vertical surface onto which it fell, proclaiming an openness to accident, while at the same time registering the structure of the support. It was important that the performances do the same. The aligned, athletic, encased body of the dancer was too autonomous, too perfect in its enclosed form, and thus insufficiently dialectical. When Schneemann evoked the "distance between 'art' and life," she was engaging one of the key debates of modernism, one that took on renewed emphasis in the post-1945 period.⁶³ Schneemann aligned the dancer's body with "art," in the old premodernist sense, and considered the remove at which it stood from "life" unacceptable. Getting the body to appear more open and connected to the "real specific dimensions" of a world outside of art meant aligning it with the everyday rather than art, and it is evidence of Schneemann's modernism that, for her, this meant creating an effect of bodies responding spontaneously to the sensual particulars of their surroundings. She had to turn the dancers' bodies into more "unfinished" material, material that was in the process of formation, not already formed. With the highly trained human material that was the dancer, however, the simple permissiveness Schneemann had given previously to paint would not do.

One image by Robert McElroy of Schneemann's early happening *Chromelodeon* (1963) reveals something of the different bodily qualities Schneemann worked with in these years (fig. 56).⁶⁴ Note the contrast between the statuesque posture and inwardly turned gaze of the woman on the left, dancer Lucinda Childs again, and the crouching industriousness of the man on the right, the artist Carol Summers, who was not trained as a dancer. Childs spells words with a sash, letter by letter, such as "LOVE" and "LILLY" while Summers rolls up a third performer, Deborah Hay, in a rough-looking blanket.⁶⁵ In the figure of Childs, we are asked to dwell on the difference between the body as a sign and language's words. Certainly the dancer's body had been called on in the past to stand for "love" and even flowers, but this one—classical and formal, neutrally staring ahead—does not seem to offer itself as necessarily equivalent to either concept. A blank and graceful messenger, this body could stand for any number of ideas, given the appropriate label. What it communicates on its own—outwardly oriented but inwardly focused—is something much harder to name. In the figure of Summers the ordinary, untrained body performs a task with a non-art material. The task is a means for the man's everyday habits of movement to be brought into the piece. Notice the contrast between his lack



FIGURE 56
Carolee Schneemann,
Chromelodeon, 1963. Performers:
Lucinda Childs, Carol Summers,
and Deborah Hay. Photo by Robert
McElroy. Carolee Schneemann
Papers, Getty Research Institute,
Los Angeles.

of poise and Childs's composure. It almost does not make sense for the two kinds of body to share the same representational field. Childs's body is as different from the words she spells as Summers's bodily texture is different from Childs's recognizably dancer-like control.

Chromelodeon exploited such differences in habitual bodily comportment, but other works deployed strategies that seem designed almost to trick the dancers' bodies into behaving more like Summers's—behaving, that is, in a way that corresponds to Schneemann's idea of how the open and automatic, the immediate everyday, should look. The two main strategies she adopted to achieve this sense were to place the body in contact with various unruly substances and to engage it in improvised interactive situations. Each performance work's sequence of events was governed by a score, or a set of instructions, with a brief rehearsal period, but the score's influence upon the performers' actions decreased from one performance to the next.

Schneemann's first New York performance—called *An Environment for Sounds and Motions* in documents from the 1960s, and, alternatively, *Glass Environment for Sound and Motion* in Schneemann's 1979 publication *More Than Meat Joy*—was a collaboration with

Corner performed at the Living Theatre in May 1962.⁶⁶ Each offered meditations on the theme of hard and soft materials (“Soft Materials” was the title of Corner’s contribution), his through sound and hers through movement, costumes, and set. Schneemann lined the stage space with draping fabric, which she then interlaced with large planes of mirrored and transparent glass, “set so performers would produce sounds by striking against them as they moved.”⁶⁷ These sounds were not part of Corner’s score.⁶⁸

In comparison with later works, *Glass Environment* did not include much improvisation. The performers were given roles that corresponded to their “body type,”⁶⁹ categories derived from Schneemann’s Reichian approach to the body, as mentioned above, isolated and intensified versions of particular physical qualities and expressive connotations. The costumes she designed were meant to further signify the emotional qualities she thought each type connoted. Ratner, recall, was to be small, round, innocent, and emotionally efficient, while Rainer was to be strong and severely concentrating.⁷⁰ Though Schneemann intended a sense of responsive mixing between the glass and fabric of the set and the bodies of the performers—between the various hard and soft materials—movement and actions were fairly tightly choreographed according to body-type characterizations, as is visible in a photograph by Steve Schapiro of Rainer posed in a tense, precise twist on the floor (fig. 57). Behind her are two pairs of legs, also not standing, also roughly parallel to the floor, both seemingly thrown over the dancers’ heads. Legs were choreographed to go in unconventional directions in this work, and the results convey a world of action that is rigid, geometrical, and set, but at the same time topsy-turvy and impractical. In this way the piece was more like traditional dance, conveying the concepts of both hard and soft, or



FIGURE 57
Carolee Schneemann and Phil
Corner, *Glass Environment for
Sound and Motion*, 1962. The Living
Theatre, New York. Yvonne Rainer,
foreground. Photo by Steve
Schapiro.

order and mayhem, through the choreography itself, rather than posing everyday against accident directly, as in her paintings.

After making *Glass Environment*, Schneemann was invited by Rainer and Arlene Rothlein, a dancer who worked in a “theatrical, often humorous, Baroque style,” according to Banes, to join what became known as the Judson Dance Theater, which at that time was already meeting once a week to share ideas and present new work.⁷¹

In contrast to *Glass Environment*, most of the performers in *Newspaper Event* (1962), Schneemann’s first work in a Judson concert, had only a few guidelines specifying comportment and goals. Each person played a specific body part or pair of parts. Some had refrains to utter periodically. For example Hay, who played “Shoulders/Arms,” was to say, “I’ll huff and I’ll puff” every now and then, like the Big Bad Wolf who terrorized the three little pigs.⁷² In contradiction to her aggressive refrain, she was also to be “a link in space between various performers,” interpreting that architectural metaphor as she wished. Those whose movement was determined by more specific instruction were to fashion clothing out of the newspaper, which was still in keeping with Schneemann’s wish to present activity clearly engaged with the environment. Schneemann wrote that the performers in *Newspaper Event* should know their own roles, “but need not know each other’s parts when they rehearse.”⁷³ The body parts were let loose into the performance space and allowed to stack and interconnect themselves at will among piles of crumpled newspaper, producing shifting and fantastic anatomical arrangements. For example, in one photograph by Al Giese, Neck/Feet and Hands form the bottom layer of a stack; Legs/Face lies on top of them with Shoulders/Arms curling somewhat logically over the top, all without the services of the Spine, which wanders around in the background (fig. 58). The dancers’ spontaneous decisions and efforts to negotiate each other’s weight and proportions here became the substance of the performance, rather than their attempts to embody abstract concepts. Schneemann was still directing the performance enough at this point, however, for there to be rehearsal notes to Hay about how to say her refrain. “The ‘huff and puff’ is not funny,” Schneemann wrote, “it is severe and dramatic.”⁷⁴

Chromelodeon, mentioned above, also a Judson Dance Theater performance, presented an even more chaotic collision of materials, actions, and sound than *Newspaper Event*. The sound was a live collage by Tenney of barrel organ music and Bach on three tape decks, supplemented at one point with a brief number on the church organ by Childs and another dancer, Ruth Emerson.⁷⁵ Jill Johnston’s *Village Voice* review celebrated *Chromelodeon*’s visual jumble, saying it “is essentially a messy, brainless ‘happening’ with lots of clothes, paper, rags, burlap and paint. . . . All made the kind of scene where nothing is coherent or formulated, where the activity is without premeditation or afterthought, like some form of life prior to the development of the forebrain—plankton or paleolithic.”⁷⁶ Johnston was a fan of what she called the “open door policy” at Judson—the way that anything and anybody was admitted to the playing space—and her use of the word “brainless” recalls Reich’s description of the mind as “only an executive organ of investigating, living



FIGURE 58
Carolee Schneemann, *Newspaper Event*, 1962. Judson Memorial Church. Photo by Al Giese. Carolee Schneemann Papers, Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles.

plasma.”⁷⁷ The evocation of unpremeditated activity suggests that Schneemann was successful in creating a sense of the unintended and involuntary in *Chromelodeon*.

The actions, as described in Schneemann’s score, were more choreographed than those in *Newspaper Event*, but they were also more sexually suggestive. In one section, called simply “The Pursuit,” a shrieking Hay was chased by Carol Summers, dressed in a wolf cape and described by Schneemann as “monstrous, growling, [and] grunting.”⁷⁸ Eventually he caught her and briefly carried her over his back before they dropped to the floor, rolling after and on top of each other on- and offstage until a blackout. When the lights came on again, Summers replaced his wolf cape with a T-shirt and undressed Hay, re-dressing her with some of the many garments hanging around the space. The scene, mentioned above, in which Childs manipulated a long sash with her arms and legs to spell words followed. *Chromelodeon*’s finale involved everyone in the cast scratching and squawking like chickens for several minutes.

In the scene with Childs and the sash, Schneemann grappled specifically with the body’s legibility and issues of translation. In a related scene John Worden, an actor but not a trained dancer, called out ballet moves with incorrect pronunciation (for instance, “pass de cat” for *pas de chat*), and Childs and Emerson executed correctly what they thought his Texas French referred to. Worden then tried to imitate the dancers with comic failure.

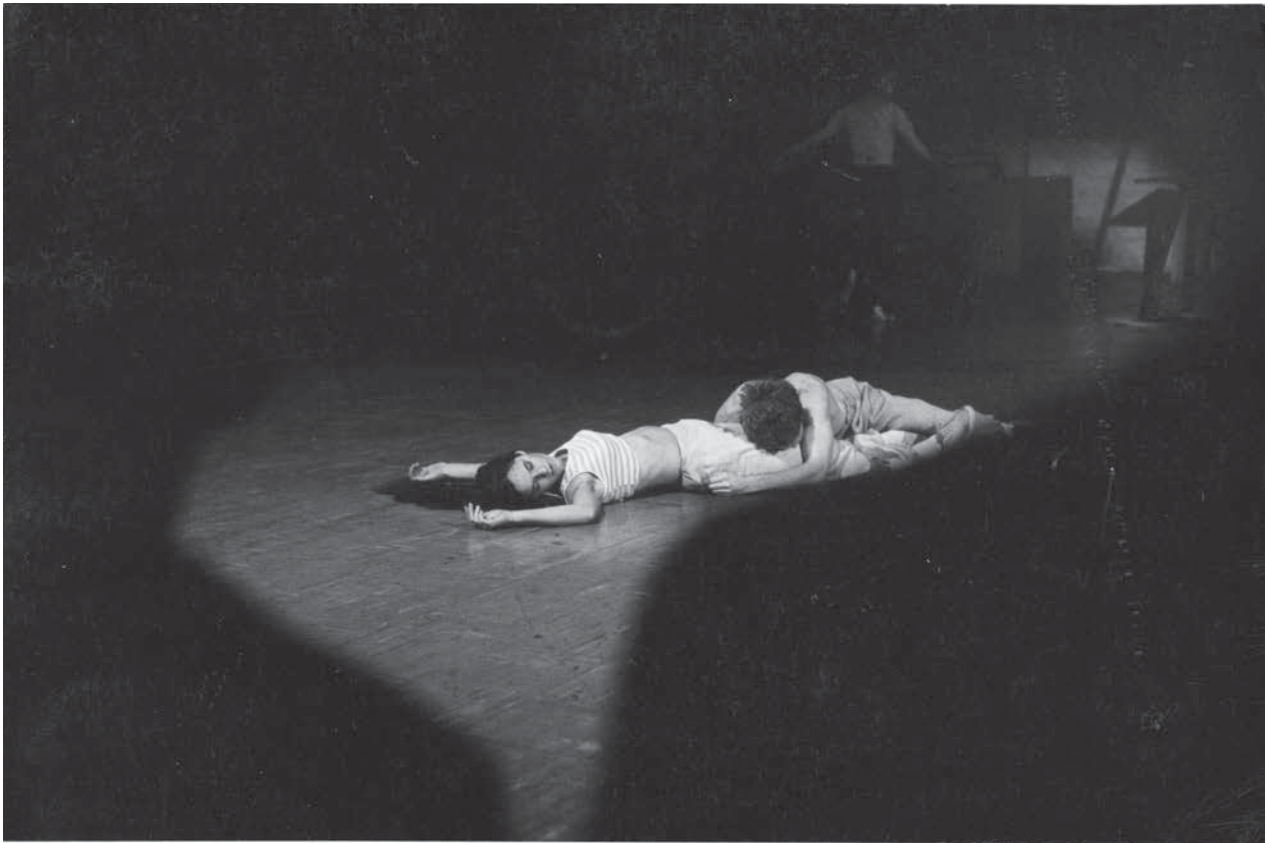
Thus in *Chromelodeon* language and the body were repeatedly juxtaposed and shown to be incommensurate. Worden's inability to pronounce the names of the steps corresponded with his inability to perform them. And though Childs and Emerson knew how to perform them, Worden's mispronunciation inhibited them from doing so because they could not understand him.

With such carefully choreographed actions (however antichoreographic some of them were), *Chromelodeon* was less a space for spontaneous motion than it was about the confusion created by increasing the number of elements in play. The elements themselves were legible—the Big Bad Wolf, erotic dressing and undressing exchanges, literal words, ballet moves; it was their collision that produced what Schneemann elsewhere referred to as “radical juxtaposition.”⁷⁹ The messy, clothes-strewn environment, even while recalling everyday concrete particulars, surely also challenged the legibility of these actions. *Chromelodeon*'s combination of bodily codedness and material jumble reappeared, slightly transformed, in *Meat Joy*, where the body was made to convey both effects.

One more exercise in antichoreography that needs mention here is *Lateral Splay*, performed as part of Judson Dance Theater Concert #13 in November 1963. It was a dance based on falling.⁸⁰ Though this work eschewed unruly materials, reflecting the

FIGURE 59

Peter Moore, performance view of Carolee Schneemann's *Lateral Splay*, 1963. Judson Memorial Church. Carolee Schneemann Papers, Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles.



more minimal aesthetic of Judson artists such as Rainer, Brown, and Paxton, its degree of improvisation was higher than in *Chromelodeon*. As in the previous work, both dancers and nondancers performed together, but in *Lateral Splay* they were all assigned the same movement: running. They were to hurl themselves as fast as they could through space until they collided with person, object, or wall, and then they were to completely give in to it, collapsing into a panting heap on the floor. Schneemann later wrote that *Lateral Splay* was conceived as a direct critical response to a performance by Merce Cunningham's company, which was for her maddeningly "exquisite and *realized* and formed."⁸¹ Bodies in *Lateral Splay* appeared lying comfortably on the floor, more or less on top of each other. The pose in one photo by Peter Moore could be read as sexual, but might equally be understood as what happens by accident when bodies deal with each other as physical objects in space—the performance, as a result, becomes another way of imagining and comprehending the erotic as plainly physical and passive (fig. 59).

When Schneemann first began in 1961 to turn from painting and focus predominantly on performance, her aim was still to surround the representation of the everyday with the painterly signs for contingency—indeed, to show the contingency *in* the everyday—but by the end of this period of experimental works in 1964, the dynamic between the everyday and materiality in her work had shifted so that the most extremely negative version of the "material" was now performed by the body, rather than paint. She still frequently used paint in her performances, and the body always spent some of its stage time performing legibly everyday gestures and activities, but her most extensive strategies were aimed at getting her performers' bodies to behave in uncontrolled ways in the space of the performance. Increasingly, Schneemann incorporated immediate and even involuntary expressions and unpremeditated actions and relationships, not a dancer's trained comportment, into her work. She asked such things to meld with newspapers and grim fairy tales, ordinary running and chicken scratching. The body in all of its fluidity, generosity, and failure was part of the everyday, as Schneemann's work framed it. This optimistic sense of the possibility of form arising from messiness is the hallmark of her early work.

ORGIE À L'ORGEAT

Meat Joy combined *Newspaper Event*'s improvisation with *Chromelodeon*'s episodic structure and, near its end, *Lateral Splay*'s undifferentiated erotic groupings, but it was also different. The concrete particulars of the everyday appear most directly in *Meat Joy* as they are bound up with bodily signs for sex. Its first performance was May 29, 1964, in Paris as part of Lebel's Festival of Free Expression at the Centre Américain des Artistes. *Meat Joy* was performed again on June 8 when producer Michael White brought a reduced version of Lebel's festival to London's Denison Hall.⁸² The following November 16, 17, and 18, Schneemann restaged it with a new cast on its own bill (not in collaboration with the

Judson Dance Theater) in New York at the Judson Memorial Church and at a local television studio, where it was filmed by Pierre Dominique Gaisseau.⁸³

In both Paris and New York, Schneemann assembled her cast and materials from people and things she found in her immediate environment, and preparation for the performance involved not only learning the score's order of events but improvisation exercises. Since Schneemann chose her performers for their particular physical qualities (more so than Rainer), it is worth mentioning briefly who they were. In Paris, she drew from Lebel's circle of artists and from strangers approached in cafés and bars. Among them were the local celebrity Rita Renoir, "la strip-teaseuse"⁸⁴; the happenings artist Daniel Pommerelle, who played the "Central Man" to Schneemann's "Central Woman"⁸⁵; the film and television actor Jacques Seiler, who played the "Independent Man"⁸⁶; Annina Nosei, who later went on to become the proprietor of the Annina Nosei Gallery in New York City in 1979⁸⁷; students Danielle Auffrey, Romain Denis, and Claude Richard; and the expatriate American visual artist Claudia Hutchins.⁸⁸ Renoir and Seiler performed a reading of the poem "ON-DUL-LA-TION" together on another night of Lebel's festival.⁸⁹ Other than herself, the cast in New York was an entirely different group of people. James Tenney now played the Central Man, with the artists Dorothea Rockburne and Ann Wilson (who went on to do performative work with Paul Thek); Tom O'Donnell, who sold balloons in Central Park; the student Irina Posner; the poet Robert D. Cohen, whom Schneemann met at the Cedar Bar and whose "normal movements" she liked; Sandra Chew, an English scholar; and Stanley Gochenauer, who was recommended by friends.⁹⁰ When she brought *Meat Joy* back to Judson, she did not use any of the dancers she had worked with previously in New York, and thus she retained the quality of the "untrained body" embraced in Europe (Rockburne did have ballet training in her history, but was not a professional dancer). Nondancers became her preferred type of performer from *Meat Joy* forward. *Meat Joy* was also the first work at Judson in which Schneemann herself took a prominent performing role.

Meat Joy's series of interactions between men and women distinguished by dramatic lighting changes offered two distinct forms of eroticism: recognizably ordinary representations and much less easily defined displays of spontaneous action or involuntary physical responses. This dialectic—which stands for Schneemann's version of what I have been calling "practice"—between recognizable code and forms of physicality that are less easy to categorize can be seen throughout *Meat Joy's* sequence of events.⁹¹

The photographs to which I refer were all taken during the New York performances of *Meat Joy*; the photographs available in the United States that were taken in France constitute a much less complete representation of the work. As the audience entered, they heard street sounds collaged with a tape of Schneemann reading phrases from a French lesson book and other excerpts from her initial notes brainstorming for the work. "I want evocation, space and place between desire and experience," one might have heard murmured over the loudspeakers, or a version of the modernist proposition, cited above: "The

FIGURE 60

Peter Moore, performance view of Carolee Schneemann's *Meat Joy*, 1964. Judson Memorial Church, November 1964. Carolee Schneemann Papers, Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles



focus is never on the self but on the materials, gestures & actions which involve us."⁹² As the performance opened, *Meat Joy*'s ten performers sat at a table before a mirror, in the final stages of dressing and applying makeup (fig. 60). Soon thereafter, in contrast with the active forming of faces into legible signs taking place in front of the mirror, an enormous heap of white butcher paper fell from the balcony to the floor, amassing in an amorphous heap.

All but one of the ensuing sections of *Meat Joy* were set to popular music: Elvis, the Supremes, other Motown, and Millie Small, among others. The first actions in the main playing space began with a series of overlapping heterosexual duets. A man and a woman, played by Schneemann, faced each other and slowly circled the stage, removing each other's clothes one article at a time until he wore nothing but a Speedo-type bathing suit and she, a bra and panties adorned with small feathers. From this point forward, all performers except the Maid would wear costumes like these, lending to the ensuing romp the flavor of a teen beach movie. Eventually this first couple, called the Central Couple, broke from their circle to stroke brightly colored paint onto each other with brushes, finally blending the colors by rubbing torsos, legs, and arms together (fig. 61). The movement required for this task was erotic and yet also awkward, as knees bent and rear ends lowered, lips pursed shut so as to avoid paint entering, and chins bumped unsoftly against shoulders in the effort to access a hard-to-reach spot on the nether side of a partner's body. For some viewers, this section may have evoked Yves Klein's famous painted nude performers in *Anthropométries of the Blue Period* (1960) four years earlier in Paris. Schneemann's more modernist version, based in real desire and intended as an offering to her audience, was

quite intentionally a much less elegant affair than Klein's ambivalent parody of a bourgeois art situation.⁹³

While the Central Couple was making its circle, another woman, the Independent Woman, inserted a strongly everyday element into the scene by setting up a mattress on the floor and creating a space for herself with various household objects. A man planted in the audience soon walked forward to join her, and they lounged on the bed reading glossy magazines, the picture of casual domestic intimacy (fig. 62). At another point during the Central Couple's circle, Two Lateral Men tied large piles of shredded butcher paper to the torsos of Two Lateral Women. The couples then descended to the floor and proceeded



FIGURE 61

Carolee Schneemann, *Meat Joy*, 1964. Judson Memorial Church, November 16, 17, or 18, 1964. Performers: Schneemann and James Tenney. Photo by Harvey Zucker. Carolee Schneemann Papers, Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles.

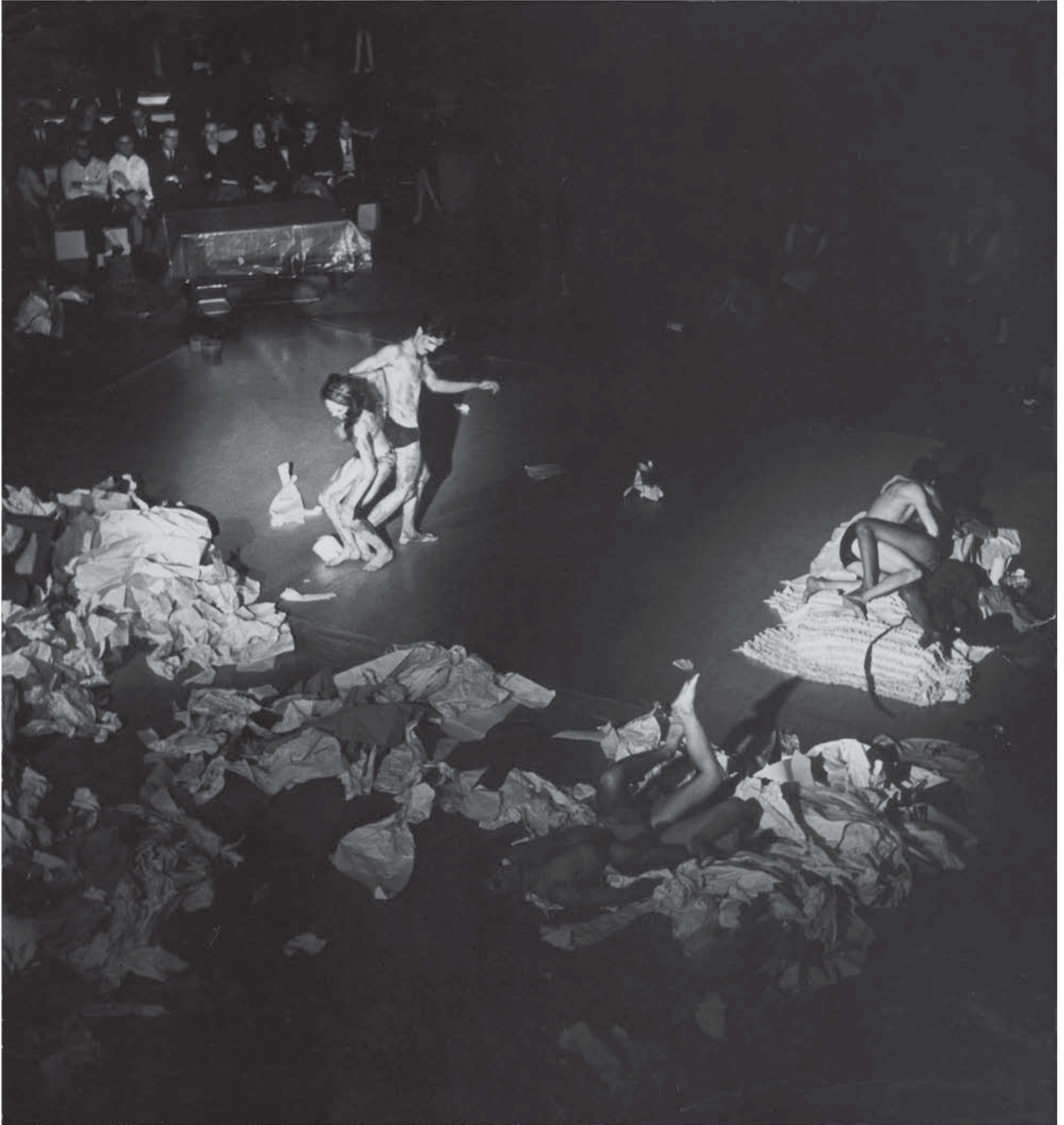


FIGURE 62

Peter Moore, performance view of
Carolee Schneemann's *Meat Joy*,
1964. Judson Memorial Church,
November 1964. Peter Moore
Archive.

FIGURE 63

Carolee Schneemann, *Meat Joy*, 1964. Judson Memorial Church, November 16, 17, or 18, 1964. Performer: James Tenney, standing. Photo by Harvey Zucker. Carolee Schneemann Papers, Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles.



to log-roll around the space (see figs. 47 and 48), the image of seduction created by the Central Couple contrasting with the awkward immediacy of the exercise with the paper, as discussed above.

In the next sequence, the women on stage were buried under the pile of crumpled paper amassed at the work's opening. After a while legs emerged vertically. The men approached the legs, removed their pants, and arranged themselves so that men and women lay butt-to-butt among the crumpled paper, waving their legs in a choreographed sequence. As in the log-roll sequence, the paper in this section functioned as a sign for "unformed matter," and grappling with it drew out the performers' unpremeditated ways of moving, underscoring their physical particulars. With the leg choreography, the body then went back to producing intentional signs—soft-core bubble-bath scenes or can-can dancer legs emerging from white petticoats. When we look at the photographs, the surrounding paper scrap seems to pull at these signs, anchoring them to the ground in a somewhat bewildering mixture (fig. 63).

This collage of overlapping couple sequences was followed by a silent scene in the dark involving women cloaked in plastic sheeting and men directing blue and red flashlight beams slowly and then wildly around the room, offering glimpses of the encased figures—alien princesses inside their protective membranes (fig. 64). Here, physical metaphors of enclosure, veiling, blindness, and skin all allude to sex, without

portraying any sort of explicit coupling. The body's physicality functions only as a protected core.

Next there was a sequence of improvised interactions between the men as a group and the women as a group called "The Intractable Rosette." It was, as Schneemann describes it, "a sequence of attempts to form the women into sculptural shapes which can move as a unit . . . Each time the 'unit' fails and falls apart."⁹⁴ The "sculptural shapes" had a makeshift Busby Berkeley quality, with women standing, sitting, or lying in a circle or cluster, hands joined, legs forming variations on a star shape (fig. 65). At one moment, as recorded in the film, they move in a circle, but are draped over the backs of the men, who grasp the women's pelvises with both hands to keep them from falling off as they waddle

FIGURE 64

Carolee Schneemann, *Meat Joy*, 1964. Judson Memorial Church, November 16, 17, or 18, 1964. Photo by Harvey Zucker. Carolee Schneemann Papers, Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles.



FIGURE 65

Carolee Schneemann, *Meat Joy*, 1964. Judson Memorial Church, November 16, 17, or 18, 1964. Photo by Al Giese. Carolee Schneemann Papers, Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles.





FIGURE 67

Carolee Schneemann, *Meat Joy*, 1964. Judson Memorial Church, November 16, 17, or 18, 1964. Photo by Manfred Schroeder of Bell Labs. Carolee Schneemann Papers, Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles.



around. It seems from the descriptions offered in the French press that Schneemann did not yet have “The Intractable Rosette” section in the Paris performance. Yet the subject matter and episodic structure of the Parisian *Meat Joy* were enough for artist and critic Lil Picard to subtly criticize its “Cabaret & Revue” quality in a note sent to Schneemann afterward.⁹⁵ When the attempts to lift and move the women finally broke down completely, they all collapsed into a pile. In this section, then, legible codes—structured arrangements of the body that resemble old-fashioned popular entertainment—were erected and then made to give in to gravity, to weaken into a precarious structure of squatting legs, hands urgently clasping shoulders, and toes gripping the floor, only to fail in the end, dissolving into an incoherent accumulation of parts, creating an opportunity to start over with a new plan of action, a new structure, in the next scene (fig. 66).

Next, a woman dressed as a servant, the Maid, entered with a tray of raw chicken, fish, and sausages (fig. 67). She tossed the meat onto the rows of limbs and stacks of heads at her feet, and they began to reassemble into organized shapes again, interacting with each other using the meat as medium. The variety of actions that resulted in this, *Meat Joy*’s climax, was broad, as reflected in Schneemann’s description afterward: “Bodies respond sporadically; twitching, pulling back . . . groans, giggles. . . . Individual rules are evolved: slips, flops, flips, jumps, throwing and catching . . . slapping . . . stroking. Tenderly, then wildly.”⁹⁶ This section involved its share of beach party, caveman-style piggyback (or piggyfront) transport, and laughing nymphets rolling on the ground (figs. 68 and 69)—codes long available in Western culture for sex—but it also prominently displayed interactions that were messier, at times uglier, deeply felt (by both performer and audience) but not reducible to any one particular conceptual framing.

Performers reacted to the sensually overwhelming conditions and the tasks they

FIGURE 66

Carolee Schneemann, *Meat Joy*, 1964. Judson Memorial Church, November 16, 17, or 18, 1964. Photo by Manfred Schroeder of Bell Labs. Carolee Schneemann Papers, Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles.

FIGURE 68
Carolee Schneemann, *Meat Joy*,
1964. Judson Memorial Church,
November 16, 17, or 18, 1964. Photo
by Al Giese. Carolee Schneemann
Papers, Getty Research Institute,
Los Angeles.



FIGURE 69
Carolee Schneemann, *Meat Joy*,
1964. Judson Memorial Church,
November 16, 17, or 18, 1964.
Performers: Dorothea Rockburne,
Schneemann. Photo by Al Giese.
Carolee Schneemann Papers,
Getty Research Institute,
Los Angeles.





FIGURE 70
Carolee Schneemann, *Meat Joy*,
1964. Judson Memorial Church,
November 16, 17, or 18, 1964. Photo
by Al Giese. Carolee Schneemann
Papers, Getty Research Institute,
Los Angeles.



FIGURE 71
Peter Moore, performance view
of Carolee Schneemann's *Meat
Joy*, 1964. Judson Memorial
Church, November 1964. Carolee
Schneemann Papers, Getty
Research Institute, Los Angeles.



FIGURE 72
 Carolee Schneemann, *Meat Joy*,
 1964. Judson Memorial Church,
 November 16, 17, or 18, 1964.
 Photographer unknown. Carolee
 Schneemann Papers, Getty
 Research Institute, Los Angeles.

were obliged by *Meat Joy*'s score to complete in different ways. Their facial expressions are often where physical form undirected by intention is most apparent in the documentation. How, for example, should one read the two faces visible in another photograph by Giese (fig. 70)? His—oohing, eyes closed, private—is an expression we are not used to seeing in public. We can only imagine in what way exactly it is a response to his contact with the woman's breast through the chicken. Her expression—lids lowered and lip raised in a curl that is not quite a smile—hovers somewhere between pleasure and disgust. The complexity of these expressions does not allow us to come to easy conclusions about the affect being communicated by the bodies.

Moore captured another moment in which performers do indeed laugh or fall into each other's arms, easily conveying the conventional signs for erotic pleasure; but as much or more, they seem to heave their weight around and reach with greedy impatience, conveying an urgent, irrational determination to apply a meaty prop to another person's back, thigh, or hip (fig. 71). There is also a sense here of the effort required to move someone from one place to another, to move them into position, so to speak, for tactical, tactile reasons to which we are not directly privy.

In response to being handled, the woman on the right of a photograph by an

unknown photographer tenses up—knees locked and fists raised woodland-animal-style (fig. 72). No doubt the stiffness made her heavier, but it also must have made her more maneuverable. Meanwhile the woman closer to the foreground does not let her whole weight hang; helping her carrier by walking herself along, she seems less heavy but more unwieldy. The sensory overload and somewhat treacherous conditions created by the wet paint begin to appear somewhat incapacitating, even abject, in a photo by Moore of a woman drenched in whitish slime (fig. 73). In all of these photographs, we see the way that subtle bodily habits emerge, logical adaptations to the circumstances that nevertheless probably could not have been planned in advance, even if Schneemann had wanted to do so.

For the performance's final action, the men fashioned "hats" that looked like crumpled shower caps out of plastic sheeting for the women, and buckets of brightly colored paint were brought on stage by the Maid. Using sponges and brushes, the men then covered the women's bodies with paint, and the women "retaliated" by dumping the buckets'



FIGURE 73
Peter Moore, performance view
of Carolee Schneemann's *Meat
Joy*, 1964. Judson Memorial
Church, November 1964. Carolee
Schneemann Papers, Getty
Research Institute, Los Angeles.



FIGURE 74
Poster for *Bikini Beach*, American International Pictures, 1964.
Courtesy of the Margaret Herrick Library, Beverly Hills, Calif.

wet contents onto the men.⁹⁷ There was much sliding around on the plastic-covered floor before the men finally dragged the women back into the paper pile. Ultimately, in a democratic conclusion to a piece peppered with fairly conventionally gendered boy-girl flirty play, “everyone buries everyone else,” and the performance ended.

Overwhelming the body with sensation in order to break it free from its habits of control serves, quite simply, to align the body with physical matter, to encourage a comparison or competition between the two. Out of all of Schneemann’s works, this alignment was perhaps most successful in *Meat Joy*, where the flexible, fluid substances covered, coated, and encased the body in a much more total way than they had previously. The boundaries of the body—covered in paint and meat grime, buried in paper, and encased in thin plastic sheeting—were consistently crossed. Body and nonbody were intertwined as categories and materials, with the differences between them made less distinct. The

introduction of meat as a material pressed an alignment of body with matter even further than paint and paper alone would have. Schneemann's audience was asked to consider the materiality of flesh, as human was placed up against animal, the living against the dead, body and body-become-thing.

Adding to the degree of spontaneity in *Meat Joy* was the fact that for the two weeks of rehearsal prior to performance, Schneemann did not let her cast practice with real paint, water, or meat, saving them so that the responses to the new textures and temperatures would be part of the final work. What becomes clear looking at images of *Meat Joy* is that mess and improvisation maximized the amount of involuntary movement in the performances—especially for people not trained as dancers. For it was not their conscious actions in pursuit of sensual exchange—not their erotic role-playing as Central, Independent, or Lateral women and men—that conveyed the sense of the body's materiality, but rather the motions and postures that happened to appear as they focused on their tasks and responded to the forces acting on them. In the best photos of *Meat Joy*, and also in the film, we see a vulnerable awkwardness along with the sensual pleasure—flesh bunching up in someone's grip, crotches exposed by fire-hydrant-raised legs, self-conscious laughing, unsoft landings. The body is feeling itself and its surroundings, pleasurable but also effortfully, constrained by gravity and the tenderness or stickiness of skin on a hard floor covered in plastic. We see the imperfection with which bodies fit together—the impossibility of merge, combined with the depersonalized sameness of a pile of legs, backs, and thighs. This ludicrous, meat-pile vulnerability that *Meat Joy* conveys is not in itself pleasurable, but it is something that every body has to negotiate in the pursuit of erotic pleasure with others.

The body in *Meat Joy* maintained its separateness from its chaotic material surroundings in the way the glass cup does in *Quarry Transposed*, or the photograph of the adolescent girl. Though they were put in the role of a traditional artistic material, like paint, the performers also played roles from everyday consumer culture. This was the era of films, remember, in which scantily clothed youths engaging in wholesome, heteronormative mating rituals made for profitable entertainment, not a radical new vision of society governed by the pleasure principle (fig. 74). Schneemann was notably unconcerned with avoiding such familiar associations, and the body as a stereotypically gendered participant in erotic play was quite legible in *Meat Joy*. The score of Motown and pop music songs like "Baby Love" by the Supremes and "My Boy Lollipop" by Millie Small further lent *Meat Joy* their version of bubbly flirtation and romance.

Some critics who saw *Meat Joy* in 1964 were annoyed by this. In making her work legible about commodified sexuality, Schneemann opened herself up to criticism from those who did not think the work went far enough—neither toward a radical new art form nor toward truly shocking a mainstream audience into changing. In New York, *Village Voice* theater critic Michael Smith did not like the "dreary naturalism" conveyed by the couple on the mattress reading magazines.⁹⁸ He was annoyed, too, by the pop music,

saying it supplied a temporality to the work's "images" when they should have seemed suspended and timeless. He wrote, "Knowing the ingredients of 'Meat Joy' in advance, I had expected (and wanted) it to be a violent, frightening, threatening, possibly embarrassing experience. Instead it was pleasant. . . . Somehow as it continued it became less and less exciting: I kept wishing it would go further, become wilder, accelerate kinetically to an orgiastic level of energy. And when it ended I felt disappointed that its promise had not been fulfilled." So too, a French reviewer from the leftist paper *Paris Express* focused on the ineffectiveness of sex as a strategy for creating politically transformative events:

The goal is, according to a summary scenario, to provoke a sort of shock, to give birth to an event that will pull the spectator out of his inertia, oblige him to participate in what will cease to be a spectacle in order to become a collective expression, a de-trampling, a liberating and revelatory creation, on the spot or in memory. It concerns itself with withdrawing from art its ordinary means, considered out of date, and withdrawing speech especially, in order to add to it [art] a sort of therapeutic dimension.

The misfortune is that scandal, this kind of scandal, does not scandalize anymore, does not even wake up the public anymore (American-French, young, not very good looking, coming in groups to have a good time: 300 or 400 people, it seemed to me). Any kind of rock-and-roll gets a more intense reaction.

And the intellectual level is very low, to judge by the flat and confused inanities in the attempt at debate last night, or by the very quick return to the same laboriously absurd games, to the same provocations by an ostentatious but prudish eroticism, to the same syrupy orgies [*orgies à l'orgeat*]. Such things do not bring anything new even to a pillow fight. There must be something else in order for Paris to remain forever a party, as people say.⁹⁹

R.K. does not identify himself as a Situationist, but a 1964 issue of *Internationale Situationniste* referred to Lebel's festival as "those poor attempts at a 'psychodramatic' salvaging of decomposed art expressed for example by the ridiculous 'Workshop of Free Expression' last May," suggesting overlapping sentiments.¹⁰⁰ *Meat Joy*, such critics argued, was not radical but bourgeois in its temporary boundary-crossing, not a challenge to the ideology governing the status quo but another manifestation of it, not even "getting people moving" as much as rock and roll.¹⁰¹ A fourth critic writing about happenings in *Internationale Situationniste* in 1963 summed up this position in the following way: "Drugs, alcohol, and eroticism, poetry, painting, dance, and jazz" made a happening too similar to "the ordinary surprise party or the classic orgy."¹⁰²

Writing from Paris and New York, both still under the sway of Dada and Surrealism (Marcel Duchamp was, in fact, an audience member in Paris, and a film by Man Ray was shown on another night of the same festival), these critics did not see *Meat Joy's* dialectical version of everyday sexuality as challenging for an audience whose sensibility was long accustomed to the grotesque or monstrous versions of the female figure as sign for

sex in Surrealist imagery and writing.¹⁰³ These critics seem to have wanted a sense of uncompromised excess or extracultural nature that Schneemann did not provide (though something about the *Paris Express* critic's tone suggests more a weary addict than a passionate believer.)

One wonders whether Lebel, an ex-Surrealist, had expected something more violent and negative from Schneemann when he invited her to participate in his festival.¹⁰⁴ In a letter to Lebel, recall, she had promised something influenced by Artaud's "Theater of Cruelty," Soutine's "carcass as paint," and McClure's *New Book / A Book of Torture* (1961) and *Meat Science Essays* (1966), the last a political manifesto of sorts (plus drug-trip narratives) arguing that "the evils around are not to be fled from but argued against with real flesh bodies."¹⁰⁵ Schneemann's invocation of Artaud, who had become a cult icon of sorts in avant-garde artistic circles in Paris, would have pleased the side of Lebel interested in theatrical violence, and Lebel knew McClure through his connections with the Beat poets.¹⁰⁶

Schneemann's promise that she would be going to "extremes" was perhaps pointedly inspired by Lebel's own happenings, which were conceived with the explicit intent to reveal the extent to which sex and violence were intertwined, the one imposed through the other, in consumer culture.¹⁰⁷ For example, Lebel's happening *For Exorcising the Spirit of Catastrophe*, performed in October 1962 in Paris, presented topless women, a bathtub full of chicken blood and water, and people wearing satirical masks of political leaders. It ended in a party for all in attendance, which Lebel tersely labeled "Orgy in showers."¹⁰⁸ The naked women and the animal blood obviously bore a similarity to the materials Schneemann used in *Meat Joy*, but Lebel's work was more extreme in its connotations of violence and its movement away from established art formats.¹⁰⁹

Along similar lines, the artist Wolf Vostell, whose happening *You* (1964) is listed on Lebel's program for the Festival of Free Expression as occurring on the night before *Meat Joy*, refers in a statement about his work to "the two great twentieth-century themes: destruction and sex."¹¹⁰ The version of *You* performed in Great Neck, New York, as part of George Brecht's and Robert Watts's Yam Festival earlier in May 1964 included, like Schneemann's work, raw meat, but Vostell's was in the arguably more visceral form of cow lungs, bounced along with a (completely covered) woman lying on a trampoline.¹¹¹ Kristine Stiles describes *You* as "a disturbing Happening that in its . . . war-like and barbed-wire-wrapped televisions reflected on the Vietnam War."¹¹² How many of these elements Vostell was able to bring to the Centre Américain des Artistes for Lebel's festival is not clear; it seems the performance was different enough that he withdrew the title *You* when recording the work in his own catalogue.¹¹³

In London, critic Peter Duval Smith was not as disappointed as the French and American critics because he did not expect much. His description of the work was a seemingly bored list of vaguely bizarre and bawdy events: "Some nearly naked girls were wrapped up like parcels and put in polythene bags. Then they were emptied out of the bags and painted all over with poster paints, then slapped about the face with wet fish

and beaten with strings of sausages. . . . Dancers stand on their heads and wave their legs like anemones.”¹¹⁴ The performance reportedly drew a large crowd on the basis of Schneemann’s precirculated advertisement depicting herself “naked, covered in paint” in images from her photo series *Eye Body* (1963).¹¹⁵ “Intellectually fashionable London did not dare miss such an extraordinary evening,” writes producer Michael White; avant-garde director Peter Brook was apparently in the audience.¹¹⁶ But the performance ended in disaster and outrage, with the arrival of the building’s caretaker happening simultaneously with the discovery that a faucet left running earlier in the evening was beginning to flood the hall. The police came and ended the performance early, which led to the cancellation of the festival’s second night, which in turn led to “Jean-Jacques and a few others chaining themselves to the railings outside the hall, as a protest against bourgeois censorship.” Even with such drama, the sophisticated critic was not much impressed: “Evidently the audience was meant to be shocked. Mostly in jeans and fish-net stockings, we didn’t look a very shockable lot. . . . For the most part I don’t think [happenings] need to be taken too seriously. What they are is fun.”¹¹⁷ The measure that all these male critics used to evaluate *Meat Joy* was shock or the Romantic association of sex and death or simply sex itself. Like Foucault, they were all looking for bodily sensation that lies outside the grasp of cultural coding. Like Foucault, none saw any critical or artistic potential in the everyday coding of mass-cultural life.

The critic who came closest to grasping such potential was a woman and a dance critic, someone who later in life would adopt the erotico-political position that “all women are lesbians except those that don’t know it yet.”¹¹⁸ What Johnston’s sex and sexuality meant exactly for her art criticism is hard to say, of course, but it at the least contributed to her different view of *Meat Joy* and its significance. She too was critical of the boring “sex plot” of the circling couple at the beginning, but not because there was not enough sex or death or both. Instead, she shifted the critical measure from sex to materiality, not for its scandalous sliminess but instead for its complex, concrete expressiveness—“Why bother with relative nudity,” she asked, “if you can make something happen with paper?”—praising the couples with the paper-wad attachments that “rolled all around with crackle and bones.”¹¹⁹ A believer in the avant-garde, Johnston was interested not in easily legible signs but in new and challenging forms of representation. Her attitude toward the thrill of transgression that so animated the male critics was decidedly ho-hum: “The point of the meat and fish and paint was to demonstrate the sensual and scatological pleasure of slimy contact with materials that the culture consumes at a safe distance with knife and fork and several yards away in a gallery or a museum.” The easy translatability of these familiar elements led her to conclude that she “saw the meat and missed the potatoes.” Her critique was not that there wasn’t enough meat—*Meat Joy*, as a meal, had an impressive enough centerpiece—but that it didn’t have enough sustenance or rootedness in the everyday, immediate engagement with materials that allows the best modernist art to resonate within the present moment. Johnston here,

like Schneemann during these years, speaking from a “proto-feminist” moment in the development of her thought, supports the notion I am trying to forward in this chapter that a modernist model of critique informed feminism.¹²⁰

The only critic who seemed to grasp the transformative potential of the everyday materiality offered alongside the guileless embrace of pop sexuality in *Meat Joy* was Johnston, a relative insider to the downtown New York scene, and even in her view, the work did not entirely live up to the promise of its concrete insights—a fact that suggests that in the clash between the pop-cultural everyday and the material everyday in *Meat Joy*, the more easily conceptualized signs won out. Yet *Meat Joy*’s modernism importantly called up this critique in ways that the happenings of Lebel and Vostell, Kaprow and Dine, did not. Schneemann was trying to bring the recognizable everyday into a modernist space of material-within-a-structure, paint-within-a-grid, and somehow get them to merge. One of the priorities these artists shared was that the work be accessible, that it address their community and their lives more clearly and directly than abstract painting any longer could. This was a major reason for including the cup and the photograph in *Quarry Transposed*, just as it was the reason for including Busby Berkeley routines, pop music, and bikinis in *Meat Joy*. In Schneemann’s performances, the body functioned as both material and ordinary object. It appeared as strangely physical and it functioned as recognizable hook, an impersonal substance for the audience to feel and grapple with in the immediate moment and a simulation of mass culture in its most banal form. Overwhelmed by sensation, the body in *Meat Joy* was made to emit accidental, involuntary forms, but they were constantly having to compete and negotiate with known poses, some scripted by Schneemann, others habitual.

It was this same optimistic vision of a cultural practice capable of incorporating concrete, “functional” sensuality that motivated Schneemann’s attraction to Reich’s theories. She updated Reich, however, making him less of a utopian. *Meat Joy*’s readily legible pleasure in the everyday life of consumer culture prevented it from yearning for a primitive pre- or postsocial society beyond the reach of repression. The coded bits locate sex firmly within a discourse, a culture, a set of historically determined limitations. *Meat Joy* was finally successful at presenting a bodily practice—at creating, that is, a set of relations that foregrounded materiality by making the most familiar of objects, the embodied person (consumer and reproducer of codes), particularly, and thus strangely, physical. Schneemann’s ambition in leaving so many of the details of execution up to the individuals onstage was to provide a model of human interaction open to contingency and accident, its practitioners—flinching and cringing, laughing and curling their lips, sliding and falling—responding from one moment to the next to the sensual particulars of their environment. The physical body’s more involuntary, spontaneous responses to matter and sound were asked to share a representational and literal space with preestablished intentions and modes of relating. *Meat Joy* was not, first and foremost, trying to say something about sex, but rather used bodies in sensuous



FIGURE 75
Carolee Schneemann, *Meat Joy*,
1964. Judson Memorial Church,
November 16, 17, or 18, 1964. Detail
of photo by Al Giese. Carolee
Schneemann Papers, Getty
Research Institute, Los Angeles.

relation to express a way of being human that intertwined cultural expectations and contingency. Sex was only one part—a crucial part—of a sensuous, modernist, and eventually feminist life. Clashing against existing tropes for having and sharing erotic relations as much as it clashed against its period's promise of an outside to such narrative framing, Schneemann's performative physicality urged her audience to come up with new structures, new arrangements, within and against which the concrete particulars of bodies in relation would no longer look so small and strange and powerless, but instead would draw their energy from the old promise of new form, becoming ever more significant terms in a sensuous language grounded in a "cunning loving instinct" (fig. 75).

3 Reasons to Move

Vito Acconci

Like Yvonne Rainer and like Carolee Schneeman, Vito Acconci's work presents the body's unintended movements for us to look at and respond to as part of his art's forms. But Acconci takes the implications of the unintended into less seductive, more repellent territory. Acconci explored a relationship between structure and the body as a material too, but structure in the series of performances he made between 1969 and 1971 (the date of his first one-man exhibition in New York) is far more rigid and strenuous than it was in either the 1966 *Trio A* or the 1964 *Meat Joy*. The physicality that it reveals is not only the soft giving-in-to-gravity that gave Rainer's work its mundane beauty, nor only the spontaneous responses to overstimulating objects and substances that gave Schneemann's version of erotic spectacle its dialectical, everyday edge, but also motor reflexes, the production of fluids, the pulled-up appearance of effort, and the deflated postures of exhaustion. Such endurance would be affecting enough on its own, but Acconci also frequently reinforces the aggression with a gesture toward his audience, making their presence an acknowledged, urgently necessary component of the work, rendering the whole scenario just pathetic and desperate enough that it comes off as comedy. What did *this* mix of embodiment and structure ask art viewers to understand?

Four artworks Acconci made and showed in New York between May and July 1970 serve to introduce his concerns and insights well: three performances on film that he would eventually join together under the title *3 Adaptation Studies* and exhibit in MoMA's *Information* show in July, and *Specification Piece*, for the Dwan Gallery's *Language IV* exhibition in June.¹ Acconci frequently asked one or other of the *3 Adaptation Studies* to stand for his thinking and practice in anthologies and in the new and growing genre of artist's journals, and he remade *Specification Piece* with a few changes just three months later for an exhibition at the Moore College of Art in Philadelphia, titled *35 Approaches* (October 1970), suggesting that he felt both works could effectively project his concerns and interests during these early years of his career through whatever muffling a magazine's mediation or geographic distance might impose.²

Each of the *3 Adaptation Studies* took place in front of a Super 8 camera, and each lasts the three minutes of a reel of black-and-white film. Acconci made *Hand & Mouth* first, in May, producing a seven-minute 16-millimeter color version before making the

final film. He carried out the next two studies, *Blindfolded Catching* and *Soap & Eyes*, in June, following the shorter black-and-white format. He then joined all three for magazine layouts and for the three-part film, changing the order so that *Blindfolded Catching* came first, then *Soap & Eyes*, ending with *Hand & Mouth*. The three studies were arranged so that they vaguely corresponded to the three stages of a process derived from the behavioral psychology and systems theory texts that Acconci was reading in the late 1960s.³ Seeming to copy a chart from endocrinologist Hans Selye's book *The Stress of Life* (1956), *Blindfolded Catching*, *Soap & Eyes*, and *Hand & Mouth* were respectively labeled "Alarm Stage," "Adaptation Stage," and "Exhaustion" in 1975 and then again in 2004 (fig. 76).⁴ The logic of these pairings will become obvious in the following description, but it could be argued that each of the performances contained elements of all three mental states.

In the first adaptation study, *Blindfolded Catching*, a man with long hair stands blindfolded by a black sash against a white wall (fig. 77). He wears the dark turtleneck and pants of the rumpled urban bohemian—in 1970, he is only a decade or so beyond beatnik culture's golden age. Almost immediately, small rubber balls begin to enter the space, hurled from an unseen source toward the man. His body flinches and jerks spasmodically

FIGURE 76
Vito Acconci, *Three Adaptation Studies Diagram*, 1970. Ink on paper, 17 × 11 in. (40.6 × 27.9 cm). Image courtesy of Acconci Studio.

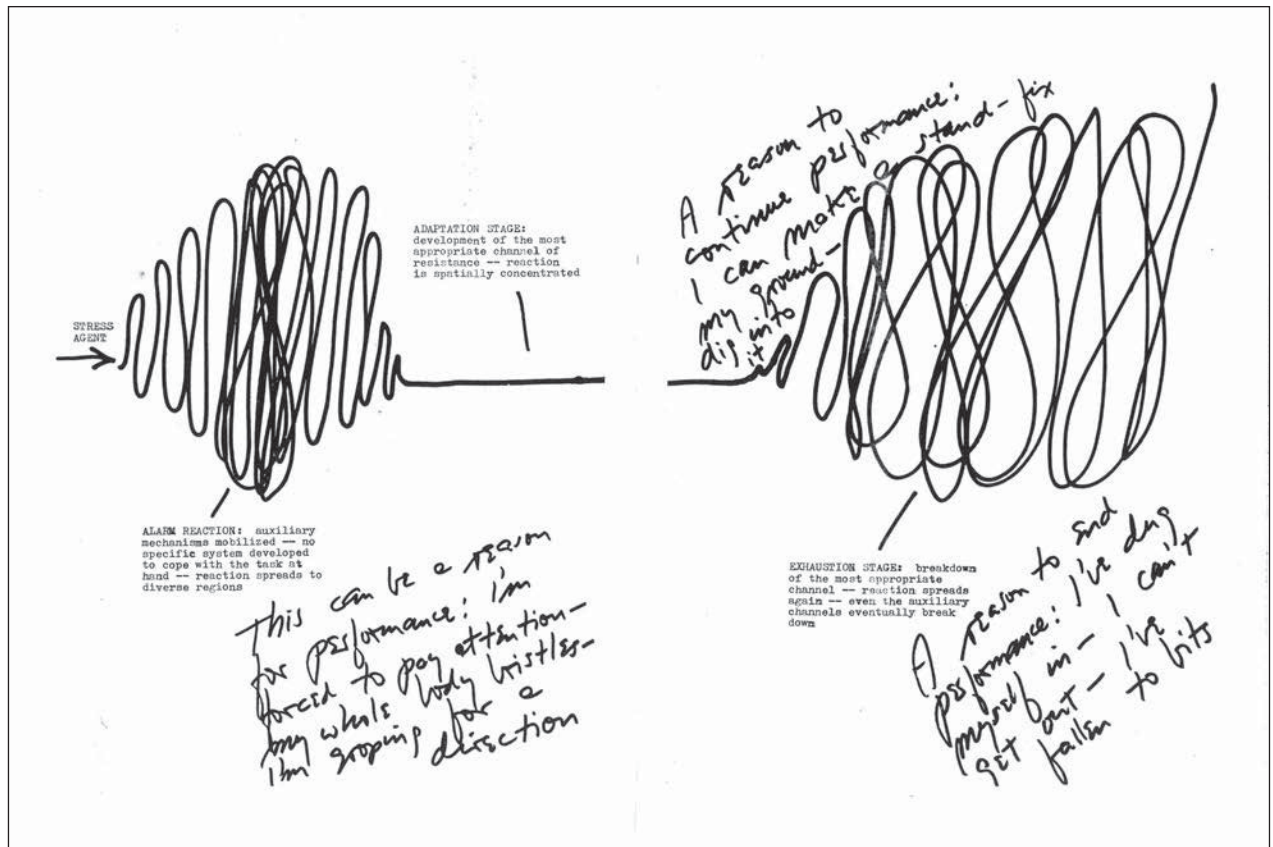




FIGURE 77
Vito Acconci, *Blindfolded Catching*,
June 1970. Super 8 film, black and
white, 3 minutes. Image courtesy
of Acconci Studio.

away from the sound made when a ball hits the wall, while at the same time his arms reach toward it, fingers extended, as if trying to catch the balls he cannot see. The balls do sometimes hit his body, and the flinching response is stronger when they do, the body almost doubling over. Throughout the three-minute performance the man's body is never fully erect, but always bent slightly into itself at the waist. He almost never faces squarely forward either, but turns slightly to the right, away from the pitcher of the menacing balls. This is a performance art piece done for the camera. The man against the wall is the artist, of course, and based on his notes, it is clear that the piece is really a test, that he is indeed trying to sense and catch balls he cannot see and that he has arranged to become a target in this way.⁵ The performance takes on a task, then, to draw on some of Rainer's terminology, but we need the artist's notes to be certain of this, as the performer never successfully carries it out. Instead the task is a test, and we see his reflexes, his body's involuntary defensive motions, and his efforts to anticipate when and from where the next ball will come in the concentration on his face and the turnings of his body.

Blindfolded Catching asks its performer to mobilize a sensitivity that is beyond the body's ordinary capacities. Acconci's task is, in a certain way, brilliant comedy—so impossible that as soon as we hear or read a description of it, we laugh. The resulting images

present us with a person not so much undergoing a test of his skill as defending himself against senseless abuse—a figure subject to hazardous conditions and an unfair set of demands with whom it is easy enough to identify. How often in our lives have we waited for some unpredictable and probably unpleasant event? How often, equally, has our livelihood depended on being able to give order to its various components and challenges once it arrives? But Acconci is more pathetic than anything in everyday life for which his situation could stand as a metaphor. All he has going for him is that his test is so mercifully short.

In the second work in the series, *Soap & Eyes*, Acconci presents the viewer with a variation on the same set of terms—embodied person struggling to endure a constraining set of conditions—but the constraint is now more directly self-imposed (fig. 78). Acconci sits facing the camera, visible only from the waist up. Thus he is closer to the camera and to his viewer, giving her a better look at the black turtleneck, the stringy hair, the astonishing face, once described as “a Renaissance mug straight out of Brueghel.”⁶ Acconci stares out through the camera in *Soap & Eyes*, seeming to establish eye contact. A glass bowl, white with the sudsy water that fills it, sits on a surface in front of him. With a jerk of the bowl, he splashes the water onto his face, covering it with a thick, gloppy mask of foam. The eye contact established with the camera/audience is lost as his eyelids squeeze and flutter in response to the soap’s burn. His face tenses and tightens around brief peeks out from under the heavy brow created by a chunk of foam that begins to slide down his forehead. His shoulders rise impatiently. Acconci’s notes confirm that reestablishing a

FIGURE 78
Vito Acconci, *Soap & Eyes*, June 1970. Super 8 film, black and white, 3 minutes. Image courtesy of Acconci Studio.

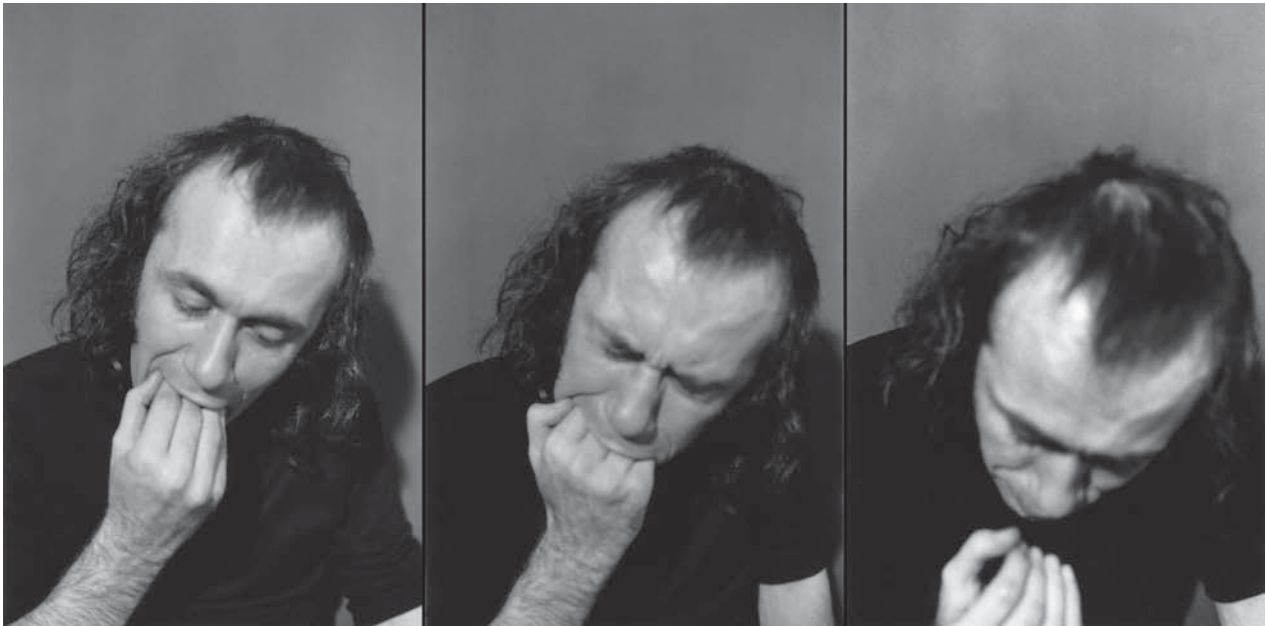


steady gaze outward is the task he has set for himself.⁷ But knowledge of how most eyes respond to foreign substances tells us that this would have been the goal absorbing his attention whether he planned it that way or not. Like *Blindfolded Catching*, the body's ability to see has been once more challenged by the work's set of structuring terms, but it seems his hands, which could so effectively wipe some of the suds away, are to offer no assistance this time: they remain in his lap. The blindness is not a result of darkness for Acconci this time, but rather comes from the fact that he cannot still his eyes long enough to focus on anything, a blindness of constant motion. The eyes reveal their extreme sensitivity, but here the body's efforts to preserve the precious organs are preventing them from doing what they are designed to do. Just before the end of the film's three minutes, Acconci's eyes have watered the soap out enough for him to make eye contact again. A few twists in the face suggest that there is still pain, but that it can be looked past or through.

To the relationship that the artwork stages, then, Acconci contributes a hampered gaze in *Soap & Eyes*, an acknowledgment of a viewer's presence, finally, but one limited by pain and exhaustion. We might perhaps empathize with Acconci as the embodied subject in the moment just after he has overcome, or waited out, his obstacle, but I do not think most viewers would expect to have much of a relationship with him. Or perhaps it would be better to say, the piece gives few signs that such a relationship would be something anyone would want to have. The constraining conditions have left him in a state of recovery, not good for much else for a while.

The last section, *Hand & Mouth*, shifts the series' focus from the eyes to other sense organs as, once again, Acconci's body reacts involuntarily to an uncomfortable,

FIGURE 79
Vito Acconci, *Hand & Mouth*, May 1970. Super 8 film, black and white, 3 minutes. Image courtesy of Acconci Studio.



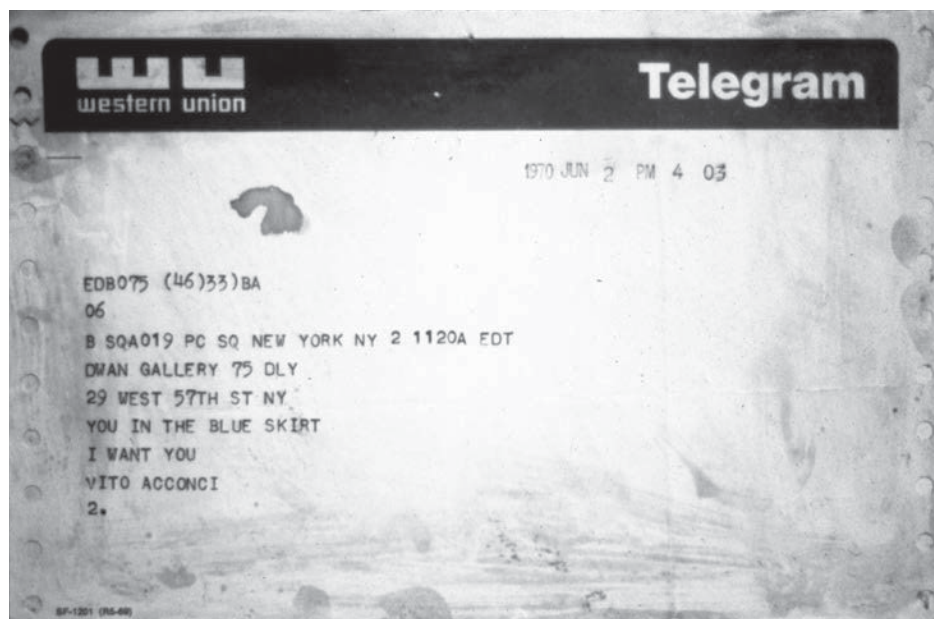
self-inflicted program of action (fig. 79). Here the viewer encounters him from an even closer range than *Soap & Eyes*, the camera framing him from the chest up. He sits against a dark background, hunched over his own hand, which he has shoved into his mouth. He stuffs more and more of the hand into his mouth's cavity, fingers reaching further and further back into the throat, until he gags, the energy of the contracting reflex forcing the hand back out, damp with saliva. He repeats the cycle—inserting the hand, gagging, and then expelling it—for the rest of the film. The length of time before the throat responds seems to become shorter. No amount of “adaptation” will make this exercise any easier. Like the eyes in *Soap & Eyes*, the mouth's sensitivity is engaged in *Hand & Mouth*, but not for the sake of any pleasing taste. The mouth is accustomed to holding much smaller objects, to closing in on something in accordance with desire and the promise of satisfaction. Here the mouth's touching is a matter of having its limits pressed by something too large to break down, too undelicious to wish to eat. And of course biting the hand is not even an option, since doing so would hurt the body to which both parts belong in this strangely solitary performance of a power imbalance. The mouth does other things than eat, though, of course, and it is certainly not hard to recognize in *Hand & Mouth*'s buildup of tension and release a sexual rhythm. Being reminded of this only renders the absence of relief and pleasure in this version of release-as-retch that much more stark.

Hand & Mouth offers the most deliberate and intentional action of the 3 *Adaptation Studies*. The reaching inward almost literalizes the Romantic and, later, expressionist tenet that art is generated from the artist's inner world of thoughts and feelings. The work of art, according to this tradition, is often a trace of an uncontrollable sensory and emotional response by the usually male artist to the surrounding world—a representation, an expressed form, that he was compelled to make. Alternatively, the work of art might be understood as a product of the artist's looking inward, feeling internally, and translating what he finds there into some material form, legible within a shared language, within the space of culture. Acconci literalizes that reaching in *Hand & Mouth*, but shows it to be ineffective. The body responds to the reaching, yes, involuntarily, authentically; but the expression the artist is compelled to produce is only a violent refusal of access—an exhausted, pained, and repeated “No.” Whether we are meant to read the “No” to mean that there is nothing within the man to be accessed, or because what is there refuses to be made over into the existing artistic languages anymore, is not clear. Either way, the artist reaches inside and comes up empty-handed, suggesting we would be wrong to see the focus of this work as personal expression. The art is the reaching, not what the reaching yields—a grim spin on the late-1960s commitment to “process.”

The tone of Acconci's formal choices turns slightly more optimistic when he reaches outward rather than in. During the same month in which he made *Blindfolded Catching* and *Soap & Eyes*, he orchestrated *Specification Piece*, which involved sending a short message by Western Union telegram to the Dwan Gallery in New York each day from June 2 through June 25, addressed to a different imagined individual whom he identified only

FIGURE 80

Vito Acconci, *Specification Piece*,
June 2–25, 1970, detail. Western
Union telegram, 6½ × 8 in. (16.5 ×
20.3 cm). Image courtesy of
Acconci Studio.



by an article of clothing: “YOU IN THE BLUE SKIRT I WANT YOU,” the typed capital letters announced, for example, or “YOU IN THE BROWN SUEDE VEST I WANT YOU,” followed by his name, “VITO ACCONCI” (fig. 80). Like the earlier limit-testing works in *3 Adaptation Studies*, *Specification Piece* was firmly structured by a conceptual plan. The small rectangle’s modular logo, bold sans serif font, and parallel columns of circular perforation holes firmly place the artist’s written expression of desire within a framework of modernist efficiency, the urgency implied by the telegram-as-medium automatically supplying the passion that the words don’t have time to articulate. The normal rules governing public social interaction—in general and especially in the context of art—proscribe the sort of direct hailing that Acconci performed in *Specification Piece*; but in making his telegram’s address only potentially specific—in not directing it to any named person but to an anonymous marker on a person’s surface—Acconci’s rudeness is dispersed, simultaneously more defended and more general than if he had named the object of his desire in a personal way. “You in the blue skirt”—that is to say, you whose name I do not know, wearing a highly visible, culturally determined surface covering, a garment that is a necessary adaptation because your body has no fur, scales, or feathers to protect itself from weather or abrasive objects in your environment, but which also perhaps carries a host of erotic connotations, or the capacity to function as a form of compensation for your social anxiety—you, contained and constituted by your necessary bit of cultural mediation, “I want you.” Though, as in *Hand & Mouth*, the artist/writer of *Specification Piece* has no feelings to “express,” he makes clear that he desires the whole mix—the connotations of the blue skirt and whatever is “in” it. The telegram’s brevity underscores the fact that identity in public, in language, is almost

always a reduction, but it carries that address forcefully and optimistically forward for twenty-four days in a row.

In asking its viewer to feel strongly wanted, *Specification Piece* invites a consideration of what it means for art's audience to be the object of desire, the potential beloved. It was for this anonymous member of the public, who would pay attention for a moment to the forms he offered, that Acconci made an artwork using a mechanical and widely accessible system of communication. Because his expression of desire was kept impersonal, it became abstract, and thus more available for consideration as something of general human value. If the members of his audience did not want each other—each other's bodies and each other's contributions to cultural production—Acconci's work proposed, then neither party in this strange, small, circumscribed relationship would be in the present situation. There would have been no mutually beneficial "reasons to move," to borrow language from the framework he supplied in the 1972 issue of *Avalanche* dedicated entirely to his work, which reproduced each performance accompanied by the "reasons to move" that it made discoverable.⁸ In *Specification Piece*, Acconci used the basic dynamics of the relationship between artwork and viewer to point to components key to exchanges in social life more broadly—seeing, wanting, naming, communicating desire.

When viewing documentation of the many works Acconci made between 1969 and 1971, one repeatedly sees performances of either adaptation or desire: Acconci's body flinching, sweating, gagging on the one hand; his body moving or gesturing toward an unknown, but always somehow particularized and specified, person or group of people on the other.⁹ This chapter will illustrate this back-and-forth with more examples below. One logical method for interpreting the confluence of these two threads has been to view Acconci's series of works through the lens of poststructuralism, as performances of constraint and coercion.¹⁰ There are good reasons to see in many of his individual performances metaphorical demonstrations of himself as either the victim or the perpetrator of the softly violent structures that poststructuralism claims determined subjectivity in modernity, reminding their audience, like Michel Foucault's *Discipline and Punish* or Judith Butler's *Gender Trouble*, that the body is not outside such constructions, but is the site where power realizes the bulk of its most deeply penetrating manipulations.¹¹

Acconci's figure in *Blindfolded Catching* is nothing if not disciplined, going through the motions of an impossible task, nearly defenseless against its senseless abuse. Meanwhile, the administrative voice that comes through *Specification Piece*'s officious missives could be seen to perform an operation similar to the reductive but irresistible "Hey, you there!" called out in Louis Althusser's account of us all as "individuals [who] are always-already interpellated by ideology as subjects," published in the same year.¹² On many levels, *Adaptation Studies* conveys Foucault's understanding that "the mechanisms of power are addressed to the body, to life, to what causes it to proliferate, to what reinforces the species, its stamina, its ability to dominate, or its capacity for being used."¹³ An argument about Acconci that leaned heavily on Foucault might eventually decide that

Acconci's works were leading away from the body, that like Foucault, Acconci discovered that "nothing in man—not even his body—is sufficiently stable to serve as the basis for self-recognition or for understanding other men."¹⁴

Alternatively, we might see Acconci's performances as agreeing with Butler that "the body is not a substance, not a thing, not a set of drives, not a cauldron of resistant impulse, but precisely the site of transfer for power itself. Power happens to this body, but this body is also the occasion in which something unpredictable happens to power; it is one site of its redirection, profusion, and transvaluation."¹⁵ Butler's insights in hand, we could argue that structure in Acconci's work is being forced to take the body into account through the body's refusal to comply. Rather than offering a self-martyring critique through imitation, a Butlerian version of body and structure would offer the body and its failures as a site of the transformation of power. In Acconci's performances, the structure may be understood to repeatedly adapt to the body's limits and needs, but the transformation comes at the price of the human actor's collapse or his being halted at limits. As a model for a transformative critique of everyday life, such an understanding is grim at best.

To find primarily critique in Acconci's works would be in accordance with the harsher notion of structure and culture circulating in the conceptual art movement that embraced his work in its galleries and journals and in the leftist consensus generally that emerged in the wake of 1968. Recalling the contrast drawn in this book's introduction between Lefebvre in 1961 and Debord in 1967, we should place Acconci in 1970 firmly in Debord's more desperate, more sneering, more resolutely critical emotional-political universe. The antiwar movement had swelled worldwide in 1968 and brought New Yorkers to the streets, not least among them artists, for whom it was a uniting cause across multiple differences; Martin Luther King had been shot; and the radical feminist movement was just beginning.¹⁶ Acconci was motivated by his sympathy with the growing critical consciousness that Shulamith Firestone attributed to the disastrous "result" of the traditional family structure in Western culture and named "the power psychology." Firestone defined this tendency as "an aggressive chauvinism now developed enough to destroy us,"¹⁷ but it was evoked perhaps no more economically than by the period catchphrase "the system." Carl Andre articulated the artists' version of this shared sensibility on the back of an issue of *Interfunktionen*, a contemporary art journal out of Germany, in which Acconci's work also appeared—"Art is what we do. Culture is what is done to us" (fig. 81)—and then, more rousing, on the following issue's back cover: "What could culture do to us if art is what we didn't do?"¹⁸ As Acconci explained much later, "In the late 60s, art and artists were authority figures of a kind. The idea was to attack this value system, in the same way that you had to attack the American government's war on Vietnam, attack patriarchy, or the mercantile system that ruled art galleries. There were these pedestals that had to be knocked down, and in order to do that, they had to be demystified. Brought down to the level of perfectly ordinary activities. . . . It was around then that I read my first feminist writing, for example."¹⁹

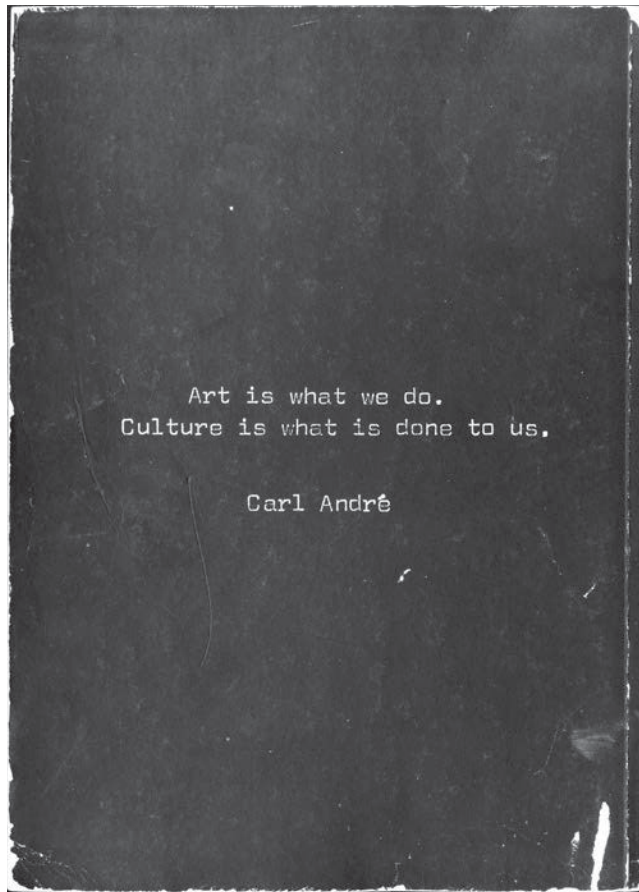


FIGURE 81
 Carl Andre, back cover,
Interfunktionen, November 1970.
 12 × 8¾ in. (30.5 × 22.2 cm). Image
 courtesy of Acconci Studio.

The broad emphasis on structure in an art world informed by conceptual art ensured that abstract ideas were given priority over sensuous pleasure, making clear the artist's critical awareness of art's complicity with the current spectacular hegemonic culture. In an article on the new category of "body art" that included Acconci's work, for example, the critic Cindy Nemser readily volunteered her understanding that "the body artists . . . are attempting to give us a message about the frightening and dangerous aspects of our society."²⁰ The systems addressed by this broadly sweeping critical understanding in 1970 were understood to oppress on levels less conscious than the level of public struggle over rights that had been the emphasis during the previous decade of protest and social movements. "There are structures that limit things," Acconci said in an interview with Nemser in 1971. "An art work might be a means to see and examine possibilities that these structures have eliminated."²¹ Like many in the feminist and black power movements attempting to make "personal" forces of oppression "political" and thus public, Acconci subscribed to "the idea of social structure setting up categories of privacies. A lot of my work is involved in getting rid of these privacies. . . . People don't have to be limited by roles, they don't have to be rigidly enclosed in categories."²² The new sense of overbearing

rules, of governing structure per se, was as deeply rooted in the very fibers of one's body as it was imposed by the family unit, urban planning, the museum, or any of the other entities that Althusser had called "ideological state apparatuses," and it sent artists and activists alike searching for new ways to address wider social problems.²³

Acconci's efforts are quite different from many less embodied examples of conceptual art, however. A great deal of conceptual art did its best to appear as *all* structure, embracing language, maps, and statistical notation, while shunning subtle variations in texture, density and volume. Joseph Kosuth's *One and Three Chairs* (1965), for example, an installation exhibited alongside Acconci's *3 Adaptation Studies and Service Area* in July 1970 in the *Information* show at MoMA, makes its cool, philosophical proposition—Word is not equal to Photograph is not equal to Object—in a manner that is incontrovertibly true, but because the proposal is structured around such minimal content, the differences between the three "chairs" hardly matter, mutely negating each other rather than expanding the artwork's vocabulary into multiple registers (fig. 82). Mel Bochner put forward a similar dismantling of the givenness and authority of language by presenting it as only one sign system among many in *Language Is Not Transparent* (1970), shown in *Language IV* at the Dwan Gallery with Acconci's *Specification Piece* (fig. 83). Scrawled in chalk directly on the wall at chest level over a painted black rectangle that has been allowed to drip messily past its bottom edge toward the floor, Bochner's earnest message reads like desperate graffiti, simultaneously negating language and its painterly alternatives, with no good ideas about where communication might turn next.

Acconci's approach to language was much more immediate, acted out with crude gestures or stamped out in order to cross over a communication boundary as efficiently as possible, and as a result his work seems much less cloaked in ambivalence than Kosuth's and Bochner's, conveying much less the sense, described by Eve Meltzer, of fascination with the possibility of reducing the world to a rational system, but in the process only proving that it cannot be so reduced.²⁴ Acconci does not avoid, as they do, directly framing or naming or providing an opportunity for feeling what it was that informational systems failed to encompass. If Kosuth and Bochner expected viewers to know where to locate their own full, sensuous sociality off-site—in effect, *privately*—Acconci still thought it should be given form within the space of art.

When pressed by Nemser in 1971, Acconci explained the constrained body in his work positively, as part of an effort to get at new forms that arise out of a process of critically working through the old (and in this way sounding like a modernist in the tradition of Lefebvre): "I try to adapt to this external stimulus until I reach the exhaustion stage, where I can't resist anymore. The ultimate would be a complete death. I don't think my work is headed toward suicide, but that kind of line is there. When you're in that exhausted stage you are out of control. You can't keep the ordinary social forms. You are forced to break them because there is no way to handle them. . . . A lot of my work is concerned with exhaustion leading to an opening."²⁵



FIGURE 82
Joseph Kosuth, *One and Three Chairs*, 1965. Wood folding chair, mounted photograph of a chair, and mounted photographic enlargement of the dictionary definition of “chair.” Chair $32\frac{3}{8} \times 14\frac{7}{8} \times 20\frac{7}{8}$ in. ($82 \times 37.8 \times 53$ cm); photographic panel $36 \times 24\frac{1}{8}$ in. (91.5×61.1 cm); text panel $24 \times 24\frac{1}{8}$ in. (61×61.3 cm). Larry Aldrich Foundation Fund. Museum of Modern Art, New York City.



FIGURE 83
Mel Bochner, *Language Is Not Transparent*, 1970. Chalk on paint on wall, 72×48 in. (182.9×121.9 cm). Collection Los Angeles County Museum of Art. Image courtesy of Mel Bochner.

Butler gives a helpful synopsis of a conflict motivating poststructuralist lines of inquiry in the 1999 introduction to *Gender Trouble*: “I do not believe that poststructuralism entails the death of autobiographical writing, but it does draw attention to the difficulty of the ‘I’ to express itself through the language that is available to it. . . . I am not outside the language that structures me, but neither am I determined by the language that makes this ‘I’ possible. This is the bind of self-expression as I understand it.”²⁶ Acconci also understood this bind. As discussed in the introduction, much of Butler’s work on the body has sought to dislodge a sense of the body as a stable, concrete term. She has been concerned to show how it is produced by, and manipulated through, language, arguing against the tradition in Western philosophy that separates the two. Acconci’s work agrees with her, but he is more concerned with making visible what exactly it is that is not “determined by language”—but which is still part of discourse—than with proving again and again that the body is (only) a sign. How we understand the signifiers of embodiment is one of art’s ultimate questions, revisited and supplied different concrete answers throughout history. Acconci’s work emphasized structures by making them obvious and constraining, but he did so using the physical body as his medium, rather than sentences, with their more linear logic. His body was not before language, gender codes, or the programs of action he intentionally imposed on it to stand for cultural systems. Indeed the body appeared through these schematic conditions, displaying more of its particular qualities and ways of moving the more it was uncomfortably compelled to respond to the schema. Yet the fleshly, shifting, factual forms that his body takes on cannot be fully accounted for by the conceptual terms of the work—hand, mouth, or even gagging. These forms are not determined by language in his performances so much as by need, impulse, and desire. The fact that the body’s difference from language so urgently needed emphasizing circa 1970 is what this book is noting.

Acconci was part of an artistic world that we can understand to have been searching for alternative abstractions to the abstractions of capitalism—the dollar sign, the commodity form, the concentrated substitute for living that collects in spectacle.²⁷ Acconci's work suggests that he, like Schneemann and Rainer, understood abstraction in art to be something that was not only in dialogue with material incident but as often generated by it. To craft abstractions (as much conceptual art did) that minimized sensuousness and denied that needs or desires played any role in their formation—though intended to function as a counterweight to the equally disembodied abstractions of capitalism—risked offering only a parallel looking-glass universe in which things seemed opposite, but in which no actual challenge was posed to the existing refusal of everyday desire for consciousness within spectacle culture. Rationality in a Sol LeWitt sculpture or in Kosuth's installation is absurd and self-affirming, opening itself up to the possibility that viewers will be no less alienated after having tipped themselves over into its logic than if they had filled out forms at the DMV. Acconci's work makes clear that art as a site of human sensuous engagement is not the enemy. In the modernist model that persists there, art's criticality is dependent on its concreteness just as an erotic relation with another person was dependent on that person having a body. Most conceptual art played hard to get in a way that Acconci's work does not seem willing to risk.

For these reasons, Acconci's work, like Schneemann's, does not support the Foucauldian and Butlerian readings listed above. To see only symptoms of a disciplinary culture in the work or to adopt Butler's position about productive failure on Acconci's behalf furthermore denies the importance of the fact that these works were done in series. The returning presence of a single performer's particular body has a kind of insistence that mimics the structure of desire—what in the Freudian and Lacanian models is understood as a “process of endless displacements and substitutions” that “structure [a] subject's psychic reality,” as Kaja Silverman explains.²⁸ After watching several tapes, such guileless exposure produces a sort of intimacy: “Here's Vito with his body again,” I find myself saying as the fourth or fifth tape begins to roll in the library's VCR, “What's it doing now?” When the serial structure of the project is taken into account, we also have to consider the many works Acconci made during these years that turn for their structure out to the world, making his body and actions dependent on someone else. In these works too, his movement toward others mimics the movements of desire—many look quite aggressive and transgressive of the normal rules governing personal boundaries in public space, but in the aggressiveness is also couched a persistent and needy reach toward a generalized notion of a particular other.²⁹ The fact that he is compelled to do so by the work of art aligns his gesture with the reflexes on display in the limit tests, encouraging us to think of desire as something fundamental and beyond control in the same concrete and impersonal way that flinching and gagging are. As in Lefebvre's critical analysis, Acconci's series shifts back and forth between need and desire—always keeping a certain element of compulsion in the moments that look more like agency than others.³⁰ As a result, Acconci's *need* for you, as audience for his art and as object of his desire, as his reason to move, is underscored.

CONCRETE SIGNS

How did Acconci's approach to the generation of form fit within a broader notion of art and what it should do that was established much earlier in his history? Acconci was born in the Bronx on January 24, 1940, the only child of an Italian American mother and an Italian father who never changed his citizenship. Acconci went to college at Holy Cross, a Catholic school in Massachusetts, where he majored in English with a minor in classics and trained with the Marine Platoon Leader Corps. After considering pursuing a doctorate in medieval literature at Yale, he abandoned all academic professional aspirations and went to the Writer's Workshop at the University of Iowa in Iowa City, where he earned his MFA in 1964. He wrote mostly fiction there, and it was only after he returned to New York in 1964 that he began to engage with concrete poetry, rather than fiction, and for which he became better known.³¹ It was at a fairly advanced stage in his education, if not in life (he was only twenty-nine in 1969), that he switched from making poetry to making art.³²

Many of Acconci's motivating concerns stayed the same when he began "moving the words into real space," and so, as Craig Dworkin has argued, we should not overdramatize the shift.³³ He was and would continue to be deeply vexed by language's relation to reality, asking questions in both poetic and performative form about the sources of utterances, about how the materiality of texts affected their meaning, about how gestures communicated, and about how words could only ever unevenly translate what gestures did. In spite of the continuities between Acconci's poetry and performance art, the difference the physically present body made to his ongoing explorations was crucial. I emphasize this point not in order to argue for an intransigent literalness in the poetry that became art, nor to claim, as Dworkin does, that the performances are above all poetic inscriptions "by other means," but rather to show that it was in the concrete body that Acconci, like Rainer and Schneemann, found a way to supply his work with a form of abstraction that aspired to a broad address—to communicate an idea to his audience in an immediately felt, if not necessarily immediately comprehensible, form—while still answering his audience's demand, its historically determined need, for recognizable everyday materials and activities in their art.

The fact that Acconci's expressions of desire often feel addressed to any "You" who enters the room, and thus invite some notion of generality or "everyone" into their structural parameters, could be seen to have roots in what he called the "really dominant influence" of Ezra Pound in the mid-1960s, when he was writing concrete poetry back in New York after finishing graduate school.³⁴ Pound was absolutely confident that a universal address could be attained through a language of concrete forms—good poetry will be "as much like granite as it can be," he wrote, and advised poets to write "no clichés, set phrases, stereotyped journalese. . . . nothing—nothing that you couldn't, in some circumstance, in the stress of some emotion, actually say."³⁵ Reflecting upon this influence on his early writing practice in 1972, Acconci said, "At the time that probably just had to do with my interest in making words concrete, making words physical. . . . Pound's statements like 'Make it new' are still incredibly thrilling to me, and Diaghilev's advice to Cocteau,

‘Astonish me!’” Comparing his work and interests in another interview with those of poets in New York who were writing in what he thought of as the style of Frank O’Hara, Acconci said, echoing the earlier interview, “I wanted so much the word as object, the word as thing, and their version was much more like you see through the words. Words are as they are, a medium, they’re reporting something. I wanted to make words *things* so much.”³⁶

David Simpson provides a period-eye view of Pound that can be taken to draw out the ideas expressed in Acconci’s statements above, by helpfully contrasting Pound with the Romantic view of language in which the best the poet could hope to do was represent “one’s own state of mind” in relation to the world, rather than the world directly.³⁷ It was different with Pound: “Pound can have it both ways. . . . He does not have to choose between things as they are in themselves and things as they are seen, because for him they can be (at times) seen as they are, and adequately presented in language.”³⁸ Such a view encapsulates the modernist model as Acconci inherited it: confidence that one could arrive at the real through abstraction—that through discipline and effort, language and embodied experience could be brought together and made to speak to and through each other. Such a view takes as a given that language, and thus poetic art, are fundamentally tied to the social practice of coming to terms with the world that has been one of this book’s guiding motifs. This tradition made room for the emergence of a conception of language as both abstract and embodied, a system and a practical tool, a social construction that adapts to what its users mean to communicate through it.

For a while, Acconci responded to Pound’s modernism very much as the language poets of his generation did, which is to say, as Jennifer Ashton has, in a manner not modernist at all but rather postmodernist, insofar as the poems were left to be completed by the viewer’s “literal” “experience,” and never fully risked offering a representation or meaning that could be read, misread, embraced, or rejected.³⁹ In a poem by Acconci frequently cited in the art historical literature, “RE” (1967), for example, all of the lines on the eight-and-a-half-by-eleven inch page contain three sets of parentheses—one with words inside and two sets placed around varying lengths of blank space.⁴⁰ Most of the words inside the parentheses assert or deny an act of speech (“I do not say it now,” for example), or designate place (“here and there”). Collected together and arranged around blank spaces in this way, the accumulated affirmations, negations, and switchings of location convey a sense of tentativeness, a stop-and-start speech act, a stuttering, endless preparing to say in which the decision of when and where to speak is more important than what is said, which is left to the reader to fill in. The poet in “RE” was more like an impetus than an interpreter, an insecurely located presence that produced a space for utterances to take place, later.

An untitled poem from 1968 similarly directs its reader’s attention away from the poem and out toward a world where bodies are visible:

Now I will tell you a secret. I am nodding my head.
Now I will tell you the truth. I am stretching.

Now I will tell you something that can't be questioned. I am waving my hands.
Now I will tell you the facts. I am waving my leg.
Now I will tell you something you don't know. I am changing position.
Now I will tell you what I swear is true. I am turning around.
Now I will tell you something there is not reason to doubt. I am bending over.
Now I will tell you something there is no denying. I am folding my arms.
Now I will tell you something that he says is so. I am shrugging my shoulders.
Now I will tell you something he says he read in a book. I am crossing my legs.
Now I am walking. Like this.
Now I am building it. That way.
Now I am removing it. In this manner.
Now I am putting it in place. Just like that.
Now I am looking at it. That's how.
Now I am taking it. This way.⁴¹

The poem calls on a reader's or viewer's tendency to attribute an intended or emotional meaning to a gesture like nodding the head, folding the arms, or shrugging the shoulders. But it does not give the reader access to the dimension of internal motivations for the gestures it describes and presents. Nor does it give descriptions of external factors—or again, even a location—to which those gestures might be a response. All it presents is what a body is doing. All you get are the so-called facts, coupled with the unidentified narrator's insistent intention to communicate something in the present moment that is incontrovertibly true. The reader could only verify these statements by seeing the body, which the poem doesn't pretend to allow her to do. Thus the poem conjures and ultimately refuses to produce the embodied person as a material sign. It encourages and frustrates a desire to see how a particular body gestures and moves. To understand specifically how—"That's how"—would require you to observe the *how's* unseen referent.

In his shift in 1969 to performance, Acconci stopped leaving the specifics of the work up to the viewer and supplied them himself. On the one hand, this strategy could be viewed as an even greater literalism, Acconci's turn to performance an even further revolution in the postmodernist turn away from language's meaningful abstraction, toward experience that Ashton describes. And yet one comes away from Acconci's work with the feeling one has been asked to consider an account of "the body," or the bodily, as much or more than any personalized experiential encounter to such a degree that "literalism" does not suffice to account for the work. If making abstract words real things had proved challenging in writing, in performance Acconci could make specificity open out onto abstraction.

One source of inspiration for working in this way was the second important influence on Acconci's idea of art in the 1960s, Jasper Johns.⁴² Acconci mentions Johns in

1971, claiming that Johns's "Sketchbook Notes" were "the biggest thing that happened to me, in '64, '65, when I was feeling I'd reached my limits in writing poetry."⁴³ Johns also comes up in the 1972 interview, linked in his thought process to the concrete in Pound: "That was one of my interests in Pound . . . make something *hard*. Though I never had a painting sculpture background, in some way I had the equivalent, because that's what I was interested in in writing, a way to make something solid . . . and Johns really influenced me then."⁴⁴ This statement shows us that the hard immediacy that Acconci sought with poetic language was something he understood painting and sculpture to have inherently. Johns's work served as a reminder of other means, in other media besides poetry, of producing concrete signs.

The Jewish Museum retrospective that Acconci saw when he returned to New York in 1964 included works by Johns from 1954 to 1964, including *Target with Plaster Casts* (fig. 84).⁴⁵ Johns's way of making paintings, critical of Abstract Expressionist style but still very obviously paint on a surface, held possibilities for Acconci's own work. He explained in 2003: "I hadn't seen a Jasper Johns painting until 1964 and for me the kind of . . . *concreteness* of Jasper Johns' painting was the fact that, yeah, you could have an abstract brush stroke, but you have to put a conventional sign there first. Which really influenced the way I thought about writing. You take conventional phrases, you take idioms, you take things that exist as language, in the same way that Jasper Johns was taking something that



FIGURE 84

Jasper Johns, *Target with Plaster Casts*, 1955. Encaustic and collage on canvas with objects, 51 × 44 in. (129.5 × 111.8 cm). Private collection / Bridgeman Images.

only existed as a sign.”⁴⁶ In Johns’s version of concreteness, abstract signs were made over into dense material things by “abstract brush strokes.” Acconci was sensitive to the way Johns’s pictures—incorporating targets, numbers, flags, color names, and maps—were dependent on some functioning symbol or sign from outside of art’s traditional realm for their form rather than an artist’s inner world—they were more like objects or labels than expressions—but at the same time, they presented materiality and gesture like traditional paintings. Johns brought everydayness together with modernist concreteness, risking what Joshua Shannon has described as the replacement of representation with “a set of material facts.”⁴⁷ The familiar sign that existed most of the time as transparent representation became strangely, densely present in Johns’s paintings. It was as if the material lent its meaning, performatively, to the abstract sign with which Johns fused it.

For Acconci to work with a model of art derived from Pound and Johns, then, was to lean toward a faith in language’s access to the real, on the one hand, and toward a physically insistent concrete sign with doubts about expression at its core on the other. Though Johns, as the visual artist, explored the signifying capacities of physical materials more directly than Pound, both poet and painter raised questions about the relation between representational languages and impersonal physicality. For Pound the two were unproblematically linked, and it was the artist’s job to give that linkage form. For Johns, sign systems and physicality clearly needed to be merged, but he would always push physicality toward artificiality—never quite fully trusting it, though never abandoning it either.

Johns’s work was already ten years old when Acconci discovered it in 1964. Taking a job that would invariably bring him up to date on developments in the artistic approach to concrete signification, Acconci wrote regular reviews of painting and sculpture exhibitions between 1968 and 1970 for New York’s widely read magazine *Artnews* (where poet John Ashbery had become executive editor after leaving *Art and Literature* in 1965.⁴⁸) The conceptual art milieu in which Acconci’s first performance artworks emerged defined itself directly against this gallery system, and its sharp critical politics can be seen as a second source of motivation, distinct from modernist poetics, for Acconci’s drive to produce bodily signs in his performances that were abstract and distanced, not just from personality but from sensuous pleasure in general. Unlike Rainer and Schneemann, Acconci began making artworks with his body at precisely the moment when the status of the sensuous had reached an all-time low in art’s most forward-looking spaces. Between 1967 and 1970, LeWitt urged artists to eradicate “physicality” from their work in favor of “the idea.”⁴⁹ The international artists’ group Art & Language triumphantly proved that art had always been and could only be a product of discourse, not feeling.⁵⁰ Lucy Lippard held international exhibitions and Seth Siegelaub ran a gallery frequently full of artworks on index cards and mimeographed sheets of paper meant to be filed away in a manila envelope after they were viewed, if not thrown away.⁵¹

Like these artists and critics, Acconci valorized and foregrounded structure. Like Rainer before them, Acconci and the conceptual artists did not want the personalized

emotional baggage that had come to be associated with the Abstract Expressionist brush-stroke, baggage with which he had become very familiar reviewing gallery exhibitions for *Artnews*, but which he, like many on the reviews staff, warded off with cool, formal analyses of what he saw. “Ingeborg Glasser presented abstractions of flowers and emotions. The paint is thick, the patterns are swirls winding into a center,” read one review in its entirety, for example.⁵² Such coolness had the capacity, as Meltzer explains, “to keep the imaginary and with it the affective at bay.”⁵³

Yet, as Meltzer argues, conceptual art often gave form to feeling in its own way when “other registers of meaning” broke into or through the rigid structural order that it valorized, leading us “to see something more than this dream [of the world as total sign system.]” For example, in a preparatory drawing by LeWitt for one of his sculptural installations, consisting of a grid covered with handwritten text, she explains, “Information cannot help but accede to the tactile and temporal registers of meaning that inhere in his process and materials.” In a related formulation, Liz Kotz argues that most of the language-based works (including Acconci’s) that she discusses in her book are linked insofar as they each aspire to be a “specific realization of a general proposition”—like a word and the speaking of it, or any repeatable plan and its execution.⁵⁴ In choosing to use the body in his work, Acconci directly invited the tactile and temporal registers of process and materials into his system, along the lines Meltzer describes in LeWitt but without the pretense of intending to exclude them. In keeping with the strong connection between language and bodily gesture that he had earlier explored in his poetry, Acconci’s structure depended on the body from the start. To invite process and specificity in the decidedly nonverbal form of involuntary movement was to articulate a position slightly less certain of its belief in the “masterful dis-affectation” of gridded systems than the artists Meltzer discusses in Acconci’s context.⁵⁵ He put “specifics” on display that flooded his “general proposition” with feeling, attempting to access his viewers beneath the skin. As in the work of his peers, structure always dominates Acconci’s performances—the man with his body in *3 Adaptation Studies* ranges from pathetic to abject. But structure also always seems to have met its match. What the body is doing becomes more compelling than the rules to which it is subject.

ADAPTATION AND DESIRE, IN ROTATION

Language finds one of its most basic functions in the expression of desire, of course, and many of Acconci’s early performances fall into the “desiring” category described at the start of this chapter. Many others, in turn, use a common idiomatic expression as the basis for a test of his body’s limits, as “seeing eye to eye” was used in the process of conceiving *Soap & Eyes*.⁵⁶ Still others combine both modes into a single performance. Tracking these rotating and interleaved concerns from one work to another chronologically through a set of examples that foreground involuntary movement and public desire allows us to see the development of Acconci’s thought process using the body as a material.

For *Street Works I* (March 15, 1969), part of a series of outdoor exhibitions sponsored by the Architectural League, Acconci made a work called *A Situation Using Streets, Walking, Glancing* in which he walked up and down the sidewalk for several hours, without talking to anyone, hoping, he noted afterward, that “I’m walking long enough for someone to notice, for someone to think: ‘Hey, I’ve seen that guy before.’”⁵⁷ The performance he devised one month later for *Street Works II* seems to have taken that earlier wish as impetus to venture into slightly riskier social territory; he used it as the occasion to start following people for art. *Street Works II* was a one-day exhibition organized by John Perreault on April 18, 1969, of site-specific art installed or performed in the street and on the sidewalks of a single block between Thirteenth and Fourteenth Streets and between Fifth Avenue and Avenue of the Americas in downtown New York. In Acconci’s one-hour performance, called *A Situation Using Streets, Walking, Running*, he stood on a corner and chose someone walking down the street without letting her know, and then ran ahead of her to the next corner, stopped, and waited for her to arrive (fig. 85). He would then record



FIGURE 85
Vito Acconci, *A Situation Using Streets, Walking, Running*, 1969. Activity for the exhibition *Street Works II*, April 18, 1969, 5–6 p.m., New York. Image courtesy Acconci Studio.

FIGURE 86

Adrian Piper, 1970, New York.
Photographer unknown. Collection
Adrian Piper Research Archive
Foundation Berlin.



the facts for each episode as he made his way from corner to corner around the block during the course of an hour. The facts included something to identify the person followed and her direction of travel (“Woman in a green coat, walking toward Fifth Avenue,” for example), his starting time (“5:24 PM”), his arrival time at the second corner (“5:25 & 5 seconds PM”), and finally the chosen person’s arrival time (“5:28 & 7 seconds PM”).⁵⁸ At least once Acconci misjudged a stranger’s direction of travel, and he never walked past.

Comparing Acconci’s performance with Adrian Piper’s *Proposal #1* for the same exhibition helps to highlight the particular way embodiment functioned in his conceptualism (fig. 86). One week before the exhibition, Piper walked around the outer perimeter of the exhibition block for two hours with a tape recorder, recording sounds and various conversations she affably held with people (including Acconci, by chance) she met as she walked. On the day of the exhibition, she walked the inner perimeter for only one hour, playing at double speed the tape she had made, the recording now competing for attention with any conversation she struck up. On the audio “Streettrack” segment posted on Piper’s website, we hear her explain to an unidentified woman that the piece she was making was “just an idea about, you know, compressing space and compressing time.”⁵⁹ As the sound track for the shorter walk, the sped-up tape would pretend it was possible to have the same amount of experience in half the time.

Piper’s casual, fluid exchanges with others and her emphasis on her work being “just an idea” contrasted sharply with Acconci’s more anxiously secret choice of a stranger in public so that he might construct a situation in which that person seemed to be approaching, and thus in a certain way choosing, him. In the shift from *Street Works I* to *Street Works II*—from glancing to running—Acconci crafted a relationship with a specific someone who would no longer be merely wondered about or imagined, but the chances that the interest of the person walking toward him on the sidewalk would ever be anything other than imaginary were at best slim. Thus though both Piper and Acconci engaged the

public on the street, and both artists foregrounded the importance of the work's structure after the fact when they presented the work, Acconci's performance's concern with the existence of an audience is more vulnerable than Piper's concern with variations on duration and location. The ideas pursued as organizing abstractions in Acconci's street work also incorporated "space and time," of course, but because the performance hovered on the edge of what would allow communication to move across the boundary between the artist and a stranger in public, the concept he most foregrounded was the sociality of the art situation. His performative proposal, like Piper's, made it as easy as possible for viewer to come to artist. She would just proceed with normal daily activities; the artist would do the legwork. Like much of the art of the 1960s that took up the forms and spaces of everyday life (like Schneemann's, for example), the street works raised doubts about whether art and life could be made compatible. More on Piper below, but her street work questions whether yesterday's sociality could ever be adequately shared through art's necessarily reduced (in this case mechanical) recording of it today. Meanwhile, by failing to provide an aesthetic experience that anyone other than he was aware of, Acconci dramatized the new art's need for an audience, occupying fully if pathetically the vulnerability that the conceptual artists of his generation tended to deny as a necessary component to art.

Acconci let his public know he was looking at them more directly in *Twelve Pictures* (May 28, 1969; fig. 87) at the Theater, in New York. As part of an effort to "Face an Audience: I might be afraid of them," Acconci sidestepped across a dark stage and exhausted one roll of black-and-white film and three flashcubes photographing his audience with a Kodak Instamatic 124 camera.⁶⁰ The work was and continues to be exhibited as only the twelve snapshots of the slumped, squinting, beloved crowd, documentation made during a performance, rather than documentation of a performance.

In another early work, *Points, Blanks* (June 13, 1969), Acconci framed, if not strained, his audience's attendant desire for him by calling the performance venue, the Paula Cooper Gallery, south of Houston on Prince Street, every ten minutes from pay phones en route to the event to let them know his coordinates (which were announced between the other

FIGURE 87

Vito Acconci, *Twelve Pictures*, 1969, detail (snapshots 5, 6, and 9). Gelatin silver prints, each $2\frac{1}{8} \times 2\frac{3}{8}$ in. (5.4×6 cm). Photographs taken during a performance at The Theater, New York, May 28, 1969. Images courtesy Acconci Studio.



performances on the program): “At 7:31, Vito Acconci called and said he was at Broadway and 100th Street, Northeast corner,” the announcer called out the first time, for example. He called a total of fourteen times, and arrived just as everyone was leaving.⁶¹ The Paula Cooper Gallery had opened in 1968 with an exhibition to benefit the Student Mobilization Committee to end the war in Vietnam, and became known as “a champion of minimalism . . . aligned . . . with the political left.”⁶² For Acconci to evoke and deny his presence in *Points, Blanks* aligned his work with the cool surfaces of minimalism—which he once called “the art that meant the most to me” when he began making performance pieces—but to give the artist’s coordinates and eventually supply him was to reject and correct a quality he did not like in minimal sculpture: “It’s there as if from all time . . . where did it come from? By using my own person, it’s clear where something comes from.”⁶³

The literal physical limits of Acconci’s body begin to clearly determine the structure of the final artwork in August 1969 with a series of photographs taken in rural and urban settings.⁶⁴ In *Lay of the Land* (August 3, 1969), for example, the idea was to take photographs of the landscape in Central Park using different spots on the artist’s body—head, chest, stomach, knees, feet—as the platform on which the camera would sit to receive the image (fig. 88). The resulting photographs—with their tilted and staggered horizon lines—bring home with quiet simplicity how irregular that bodily starting point was. The horizontal body is shown to have many viewing, or sensing, positions, many different heights from which it takes in its surroundings, while the camera’s presence is made inseparable from the embodied perception on which it depends.⁶⁵ Photography connoted modernity and spectacle, of course, but what stands out about Acconci’s experiments with the camera is the way they asked his viewer to witness a plan bending to accommodate embodied reality. Photography was shown to be poised between structure and body—a machine dependent on the world and the human desire to see the world, or to see the world again, mediated, for its existence.

FIGURE 88

Vito Acconci, *Lay of the Land*, 1969. Five gelatin silver prints, each 5.7 × 6.5 in. (14.5 × 16.5 cm). Photographs taken during a photo piece, Central Park, New York, August 3, 1969. Images courtesy Acconci Studio.



Acconci's contribution to *Street Works IV*, the now well known *Following Piece* (October 3–25, 1969), contrasts illuminatingly with Scott Burton's *Self-Work: Dream*, performed for the same exhibition. For *Following Piece* Acconci chose a person at random on the street every day of the month (except two) and followed him through the city as long as he remained in public places, documenting their joined path (lasting anywhere from a few minutes to several hours) in writing and, once, in photographs (figs. 89–91).⁶⁶ Thus, like the street works from the previous spring described above, *Following Piece* acted out a gesture of desire (now even more aggressive and “creepy”⁶⁷), but also demanded a fairly high level of bodily endurance, as the artist descended to and from subway platforms or waited for hours in department stores or outside restaurants, putting off meeting his own needs until the followed person retreated to meet his.

For *Self-Work: Dream*, by contrast, Burton drugged himself to sleep for the *Street Works IV* opening party held by the Architectural League at the American Federation of Arts building and lay on a cot alone all evening while people drank and mingled around him (fig. 92).⁶⁸ A few months earlier in his work for *Street Works III*, *Ear Piece* (May 1969), Burton had similarly walked through the exhibition blocks with his ears plugged. Burton's defensive early works evoked the need for an art audience that we see in Acconci's work, but with more demands insofar as they challenged his viewer to speak loudly enough to make him hear or wake him up. They also ran the risk that no one would care, or that they would receive Burton's alienated isolation with comfortable recognition, an art like life in the spirit of Andy Warhol or Robert Morris. Acconci's *Following Piece* performed a version of alienation in the public sphere, to be sure, with the prohibitions surrounding bourgeois private space adhered to as part of the work's schema, but it also performed an exaggerated attempt to reach past the alienation that it drew attention to, to make one stranger in the crowd more than an anonymous blur that day. The work failed every time—all that Acconci gained was information rather than a reciprocal relationship—but *Following Piece*





FIGURE 89

Vito Acconci, *Following Piece*,
October 1969. Activity for the
exhibition *Street Works IV*,
October 3–25, 1969, New York.
Photo by Betsy Jackson.



FIGURE 90

Vito Acconci, *Following Piece*,
October 1969. Activity for the
exhibition *Street Works IV*,
October 3–25, 1969, New York.
Photo by Betsy Jackson.

FIGURE 91

Vito Acconci, *Following Piece Daily
Episodes*, 1969. Typewritten paper,
11 × 8½ in. (27.9 × 21.6 cm). Image
courtesy Acconci Studio.

At 11:23 AM, she boards RR train to Queens.
At 11:54 AM, she gets off train at 30th Ave., and walks west on 30th Ave.
At 12:07 PM, she enters house, 23-01 30th Ave.

Oct 10
1:28 PM; 31st St. & 6th Ave., southeast corner.
Woman in blue dress; she walks north on 6th Ave., east on 35th St.
At 1:47 PM, she enters Franklin & Simon department store, employees' entrance, between 5th and 6th Ave.; she goes to first floor, where she works behind jewelry counter.
At 6 PM, she leaves Franklin & Simon, and walks west on 35th St.; at subway station, 35th St. & 6th Ave., she walks down and goes to uptown side, IND subway.
At 6:13 PM, she boards D train.
At 6:44 PM, she gets off train at Fordham Rd., in the Bronx; she walks east on Fordham, south on Tiebout Ave.
At 6:57 PM, she enters apartment building, 2428 Tiebout Ave.

Oct 11
3:44 PM; 8th St. & 6th Ave., northeast corner.
Woman in orange coat; she walks east on 8th St., north side of street.
At 3:57 PM, she enters Fred Braun's, leather store.
At 4:18 PM, she leaves Fred Braun's and continues east.
At 4:29 PM, she enters Experiment One, clothing store.
At 4:53 PM, she leaves Experiment One and walks west.
At 4:56 PM, she enters Eighth St. Bookstore.
At 5:10 PM, she leaves Eighth St. Bookstore and walks east.
At 5:26 PM, she enters Michele, shoe store.
At 5:59 PM, she leaves Michele and continues east.
At 6:12 PM, she goes down into IRT subway station, Astor Place, uptown side.
At 6:15 PM, she boards uptown local.
At 6:39 PM, she gets off train at 77th St, stop and walks east on 77th, turns south on York Ave.
At 7:12 PM, she enters building, 1432 York Ave.

Oct 12
I didn't follow anyone.

Oct 13
11:10 AM; Bleecker & 10th St., southwest corner.
Man in brown jacket; he walks south on Bleecker, west side of street.
At 11:17 AM, he enters Bleecker St. Hardware Store, 316 Bleecker St.
At 11:26 AM, he leaves Bleecker St. Hardware Store and walks north on Bleecker, west side of street, then west on 10th, south side of street.
At 11:32 AM, he enters apartment building, 240 W. 10th St.

Oct 14
5 PM; 6th Ave. & 4th St., southwest corner.
Man with black attache case; he walks south on 6th Ave.
At 5:01 PM, he goes down into IND subway station, 6th Ave. & 3rd St.; he stands on uptown side, upper platform.
At 5:08 PM, he boards F train.

confidently claimed public space to be as much the realm of desire as of individual containment. Burton's—and Piper's (discussed below)—own respective sense of the limits of their conceptualism were perhaps revealed when they both shifted within a few years to making works that broached confrontation and communication head-on.⁶⁹

The street works had already placed Acconci in a structure in which he was out of control of his actions—dependent on another's path—but the first performance to make him passive in a painful way was a performance during the same month as *Following Piece* at New York University in a series at the Loeb Center organized by the curator and gallerist John Gibson called *Performance (Sitting, Undergoing, Going Under)* (October 1969; fig. 93). Acconci, sitting in the audience for an evening of performances and films, with the help of an assistant cracked a tray of ice cubes down his back and left them there between skin and shirt to melt and numb for the duration of the evening. The photograph Acconci distributes to stand for the work, in which he appears shirtless, was not taken during the actual performance, obviously, but his choice to present his naked back makes it that much more viscerally affecting as a document.

In *Performance Test* (December 1969), Acconci's emphasis turned back to the audience again, but focused now on the exchange of "looks," as he sat in a chair onstage at the Emanu-el YM-YWHA and stared into the face of each person in his live audience one by one for thirty seconds each, lasting in total about thirty minutes (fig. 94).⁷⁰ In photographs of the work Acconci, dressed in a trench coat and flanked by twin shadows, resembles a film noir detective—a masculine evaluator exercising his gaze (though his dirty sneakers, long hair,

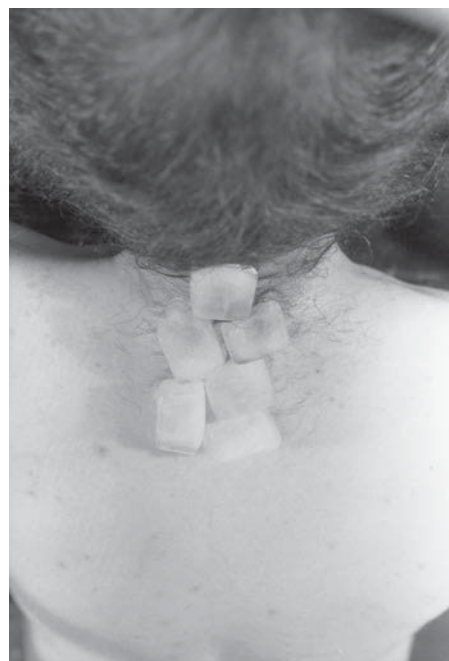
FIGURE 92

Peter Moore, performance photograph of Scott Burton's *Self-Work: Dream*, October 1969, for the exhibition *Street Works IV*. American Federation of Arts Building, New York. Scott Burton Papers V. 12, Museum of Modern Art Archives, New York.



FIGURE 93

Vito Acconci, *Performance (Sitting, Undergoing, Going Under)*, October 1969. Studio restaging of activity performed at NYPL-PANYU Loeb Student Center October 10, 1969. Image courtesy of Acconci Studio.



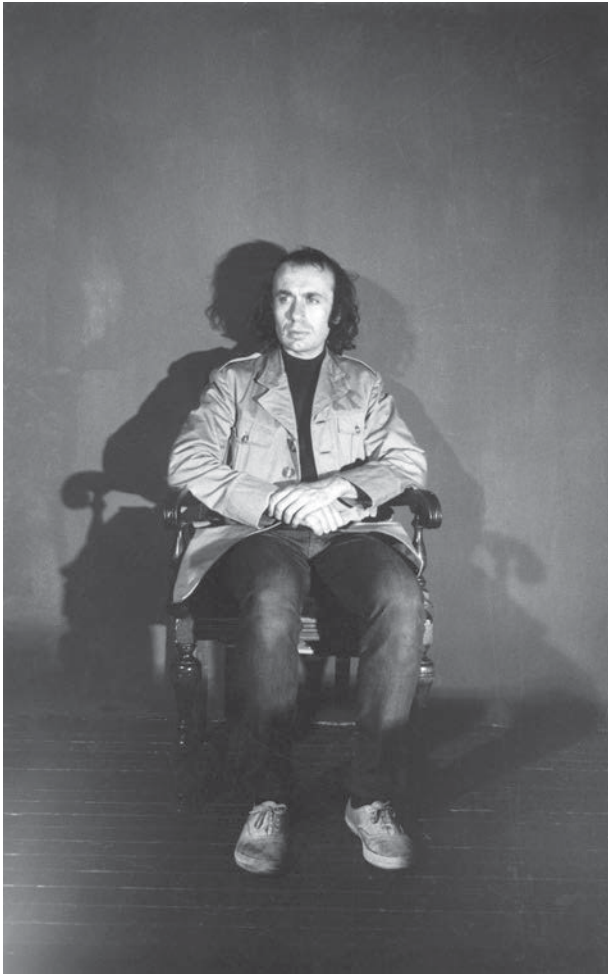


FIGURE 94

Vito Acconci, *Performance Test*, 1969. Thirty-minute performance at Emanu-el NYPL-PAYM-YWHA, December 3, 1969. Images courtesy of Acconci Studio.

and youthful face undermine a stable reading of his gender, making him look more hip than traditionally manly). *Performance Test* interrogated the Romantic model of art not by parodically presenting the sort of artist-figure who might have produced its disintegrating forms (as *Hand & Mouth* would) but rather, like *Specification Piece*, by seeming to have gotten stuck establishing the fundamental condition for any artistic exchange to take place at all: an artwork that “looks” out to the world in some way, and a set of viewers who look back.

Two months later, in *Step Piece* (February, April, July, and November 1970), Acconci returned to his body with an emphasis on fitness this time, as he stepped up and down on a stool about eighteen inches high for as long as he could stand it every day for a month in his apartment and recorded his progress, repeating the month of exercise after longer and longer intervals of not exercising (figs. 95–96). (The public was invited to view the work through mailed announcements, but no one came.⁷¹) By the final installment of the piece in November, after a three-month break, his body performed at about the same

FIGURE 95

Vito Acconci, *Step Piece*, 1970.
Performance at 102 Christopher
Street, New York. Image courtesy
of Acconci Studio.

FIGURE 96

Vito Acconci, *Step Piece Progress
Report*, February 1970. Typewritten
paper, 11 × 8½ in. (27.9 × 21.6 cm).
Image courtesy Acconci Studio.

level at which he had begun. *Step Piece* made available for Acconci's eventual viewers the involuntary signs of both his effort and his improvement. Documentary photographs suggest that sweating, heavy breathing, and the slump or stiffening of his shoulders as he became fatigued were all bodily effects put on display. The concept for the piece suggests that a progressively smaller waistline or larger muscles might also have been detectable to someone privy to repeated viewings, had anyone been there. The substance of the report produced (sent out to the art community at the end of each month of stepping) was left up to his body—the gradually lengthening times on the list a sort of narrative of what the body did, on its own, as it were, in response to the exercise. The collected reports tell his audience, now functioning as a judge or authority, the story of the body's refusal to be permanently reshaped or inscribed in the name of improvement.

In May and June Acconci made the three works for film that would become *3 Adaptation Studies*, and sent the telegrams for *Specification Piece*, all described above



Progress Report: daily record of performance time:
First month (February 1970):

Date	Duration
Feb. 1	3 min. 20 sec.
2	3 min. 40 sec.
3	3 min. 8 sec.
4	3 min. 12 sec.
5	3 min. 20 sec.
6	3 min. 16 sec.
7	6 min. 36 sec.
8	8 min. 0 sec.
9	8 min. 48 sec.
10	3 min. 52 sec.
11	9 min. 8 sec.
12	9 min. 0 sec.
13	10 min. 12 sec.
14	10 min. 44 sec.
15	11 min. 12 sec.
16	11 min. 40 sec.
17	13 min. 20 sec.
18	13 min. 48 sec.
19	14 min. 40 sec.
20	14 min. 28 sec.
21	15 min. 40 sec.
22	17 min. 24 sec.
23	18 min. 8 sec.
24	19 min. 12 sec.
25	20 min. 36 sec.
26	21 min. 16 sec.
27	21 min. 48 sec.
28	23 min. 0 sec.



FIGURE 97

Vito Acconci, *Hand & Mouth*, May 1970. Contact sheets for Super 8 film, black and white, 3 minutes. Image courtesy of Acconci Studio.

(fig. 97). He performed a similarly trying work, *Run-off* (July 1970), the following month for photographer Bernadette Mayer (fig. 98), jogging in place naked for two hours to generate enough sweat that large quantities of blue tempera pigment from a nearby wall would transfer onto his skin when he rubbed against it. The running was intentional, the sweating involuntary, the transfer of color also to a large degree out of his control, limited by the contours and flexibility of his body. Because the final two photographs documenting the stages of the performance present Acconci both from the front and the back, the

creation of the painted marks appears as a sort of end point or goal, and the involuntariness of the all-important sweat in securing the marks on his skin is underscored. It is not that Acconci painted something, or painted himself, but rather that his body drew the paint onto it through its own material processes.

The focus turned outward again for the *Software* show at the Jewish Museum in New York (September–November 1970), where Acconci performed *Proximity Piece*, a performance in which he hung around in the galleries for some part of each day that the museum was open and crowded closer and closer into the personal contemplative space of selected museum visitors until they moved away from him, his exercise in impoliteness testing their limits this time rather than his own (figs. 99–100). In some of the photographs of this work Acconci, looking unusually tall, looms over his target; in others, it seems the contest was more balanced. The performance raises questions about the museum as a public place for art’s particular form of sociality. What does it mean to have potentially profound, private experiences in the same public space together? Or do we have feelings in front of works of art anymore? Acconci’s test seems to prove that, if nothing else, viewers retain their automatic self-preserving reflexes.

At the same time that *Software* ran, Acconci reiterated *Specification Piece* with variations in a work called *35 Approaches* (October–November 1970) at the Moore College of Art in Philadelphia, letting another city’s anonymous viewers in “plaid skirts” and “purple scarves” know he wanted them, too (figs. 101–2).⁷² For the new iteration, even more bureaucratic-looking than the first, Acconci typed and sent a letter each day rather than a telegram, including with it a small transparent circular plastic dish with a lid containing a disposable bit from his own body—a leg hair for example. Each letter, after the hailing and the matter-of-fact, like-it-or-not expression of desire—“You in the white bell-bottoms: / I want you”—now ended with a more formal explanation, “I am enclosing a gift, a sample from my body, as an introduction and a token of my availability,” and his handwritten

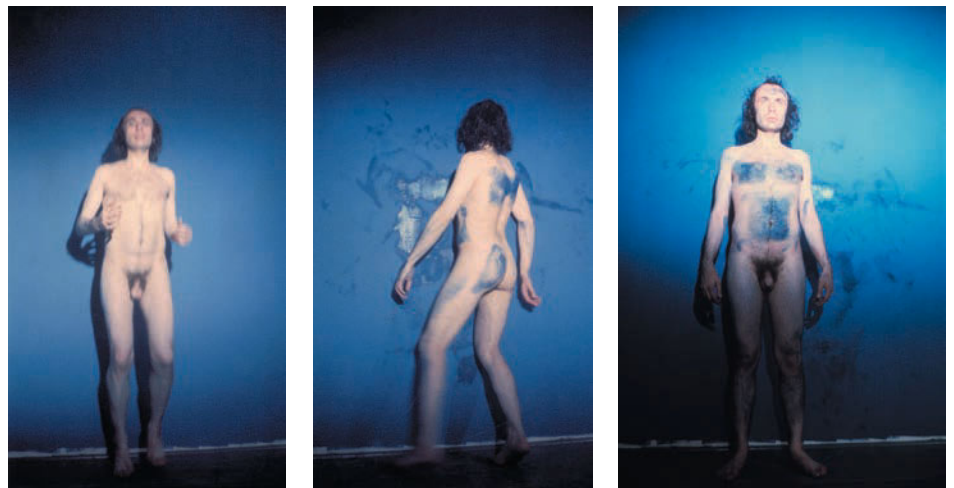


FIGURE 98

Vito Acconci, *Run-off*, July 1970.
Photographed activity. Photos by
Bernadette Mayer. Images courtesy
of Acconci Studio.



FIGURE 99
Vito Acconci, *Proximity Piece*, 1970.
Performance for the exhibition
Software, Jewish Museum, New
York, September 10–November 8,
1970. Image courtesy of Acconci
Studio.



FIGURE 100
Vito Acconci, *Proximity Piece*, 1970.
Performance for the exhibition
Software, Jewish Museum, New
York, September 10–November 8,
1970. Image courtesy of Acconci
Studio.

signature. The articles of clothing specified by the sender are sometimes gender-specific but more frequently not. They offer their reader a window onto 1970s fashion to be sure, and perhaps invite us to find our own fashion identity among the list of types hailed, or, if no match is found, to follow the chain of associations that each item sets off, conjuring the person in the “brown culottes,” the “white peasant blouse,” the “orange sweater,” or the “black pants” who might have inspired such a direct yet defended love letter (were they perhaps individuals followed during the *Street Works* exhibitions?). When the work has subsequently been exhibited (as it was in 2004 at the Barbara Gladstone Gallery in New York), or as it exists as documentation in books, the plastic containers have been replaced with a handwritten record of their past contents on the bottom of the letter. These notes let us know that Acconci’s choice of bodily substances carried connotations that ranged from the more traditional and easily accessible (a lock of hair, a toe- or fingernail clipping from a specified digit) to the less obvious and more transgressive (fingernail dirt, whisker shavings, blackheads) to the decidedly intimate or taboo (saliva, semen, urine). Bodily fluids would not yet have been associated with the threat of AIDS in 1970, but more general boundaries

of hygiene were certainly being tested or crossed. By enclosing a discarded and possibly disgusting piece of his own unmediated body, the artist brought home the point that what he wanted from his audience ultimately went beyond fashion to the no less public, if more closely tied to embodied feeling, form of communication enabled by art.

A few months later Acconci combined aggressive gesture with fallible body in *Centers* (February 1971), the now well known performance for video in which he kept his index finger trained on the middle of the lens of a video camera, thus pointing at his

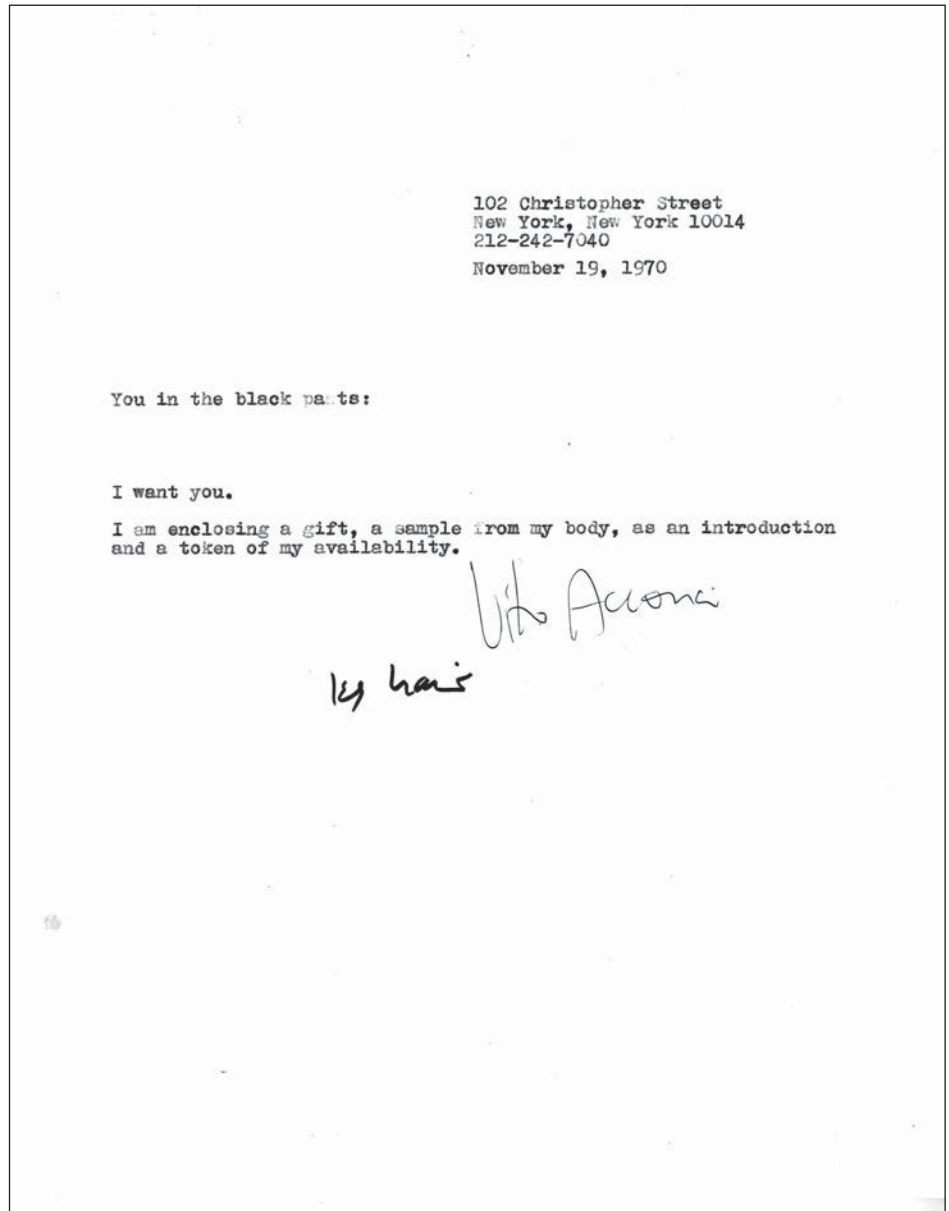
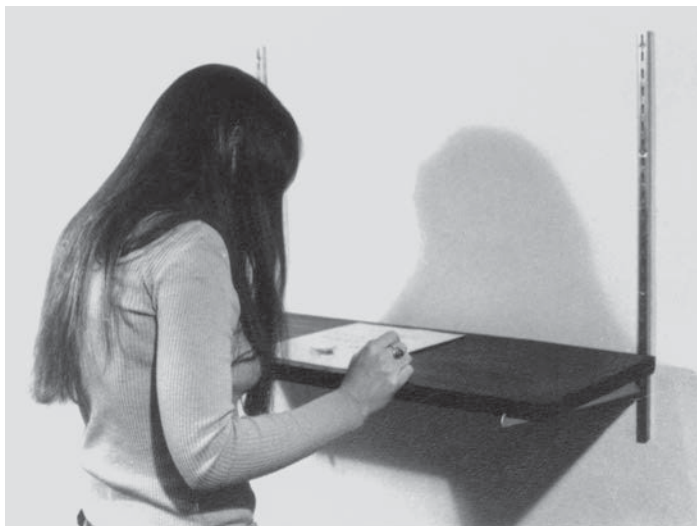


FIGURE 101

Vito Acconci, *35 Approaches*, 1970, detail. Typewritten paper, 11 × 8½ in. (27.9 × 21.6 cm). Installation/ activity for the exhibition *Recorded Activities*, Moore College of Art, Philadelphia, October–November 1970. Image courtesy of Acconci Studio.

FIGURE 102

Vito Acconci, *35 Approaches*, 1970, detail. Installation/activity for the exhibition *Recorded Activities*, Moore College of Art, Philadelphia, October–November 1970. Image courtesy of Acconci Studio.



expected viewer, without letting his arm down to rest for twenty-two minutes (fig. 103).⁷³ The wavering arm makes us aware of his bodily limits even while he is hailing us. At one point he has to hold the pointing arm up for several seconds with his other arm and hand. The performing body in *Centers* has intention—it addresses, desires—and it also shakes and collapses in response to the exertion necessary to express its will within the guidelines. In comparison with *Step Piece*, *Centers* suggests that the transformation of physical limits (if his shoulder becomes stronger as a result of this exercise, say) is more likely and sustainable when social desire is an intrinsic part of the governing program.

THE RELIABILITY OF THE INNATE

In November 1970 Acconci published pictures of several artworks, including *Hand & Mouth*, and a formal piece of writing on his new performance practice, “Some Notes on Activity and Performance,” in *Interfunktionen*.⁷⁴ “Generating expression—and hence making the information available—need not be an official end of the action,” he wrote, “but only a side-effect. The intention of the performer can be [to] make unwitting moves, observable behavior unoriented to the assessment an observer might be making of it.”⁷⁵ Proposing a new relationship between the artist’s labor and the expression that had traditionally been viewed as the main content of an artwork, Acconci offered here a version of artistic process in which the content would only happen to be filled in, an accidental byproduct of the artist’s activity. (And yet he still made room for the idea that the performer might intend for his action to be vulnerably out of control in this way.)

Acconci’s text explained what he meant by the “adaptive lines of action” pursued in certain of his works in neutral, undramatic terms: “A performance can consist of performing (adhering to the terms of) a particular element (a rule, a space, a previous performance,

FIGURE 103

Vito Acconci, *Centers*, February 1971. Video, black and white, 20 minutes. Image courtesy of Acconci Studio.



another person). . . . The performance can be set up as a learning process.”⁷⁶ Even when an adaptive performance involved much less of the performer’s will, Acconci’s way of writing about the bodily struggle he staged was dry and clinical, at times overtly referring to the body as if it were a machine: “The performance can begin with an alarm reaction to a stimulus, when the performer is groping because he has not yet specifically developed a system to cope with the task at hand. . . . The performance can continue to a stage of exhaustion, when the specific channel of adaptation is broken down—the reaction spreading over different areas—and momentum is retained for a while after the shutoff of power.”⁷⁷ Almost as if warding off the emotional reading of discomfort that the works invite, Acconci uses the language of a scientist describing his experimental subject—avoiding the first person and any interpretation of the actions or situation for his reader. The point of these experiments, he further explained, was to “shift into explicit focus what is normally unattended to,” making a space for “the control (or lack of control) of personal information.” Acconci’s tone throughout “Some Notes on Activity and Performance” remains unworried about the grim possibility, spelled out in the text’s final sentence, that his work might be recklessly reproducing a situation in which the individual’s “capacity to move more or less at will” was on the line.

The ideas from this text guided the organization of his first solo show at the John Gibson Gallery the following spring. The John Gibson Gallery was located on East Sixty-Seventh Street in New York. Two important experimental sculpture shows had been held there in 1968: *The Hanging, Floating, Cantilevered Show* (including a wall drawing by LeWitt and Andy Warhol’s helium-filled *Silver Clouds*) and *Anti-form* (including Eva Hesse and Richard Serra among other artists who would become known as postminimalist). Gibson

held an exhibition of new earthworks artists, *Ecologic Art*, in 1969, and two solo shows by Dennis Oppenheim, another conceptual body artist (and someone Acconci admired very much), in 1968 and 1970.⁷⁸ Acconci's show, *Ongoing Activities and Situations* (March 27–April 24, 1971), consisted of one wall covered with documentation of various works Acconci had made since 1969 and three new performance works.⁷⁹ The documentation, which concerns us here because it constitutes the first exhibition on one site of many of the works this chapter has been tracking, consisted of snapshot photographs (of both live and videotaped performances—no films or videos were shown) and brief typed descriptions.⁸⁰ Documentation of *Blindfolded Catching*, *Following Piece*, *Performance Test*, *Proximity Piece*, *Run-off*, and *Centers* all hung on the wall.⁸¹ The exhibition was accompanied by a text consisting of a set of numbered notes. Even briefer and cooler than “Some Notes on Activity and Performance,” the text provided an overview of the exhibition's concerns, and grouped Acconci's works into categories that aligned them with concepts familiar from the earlier formulation: “adaptive lines of action,” “performer as conformer,” and “exhaustion,” for example.

Critics virtually ignored Acconci's audience-oriented works and the cool tone of his scientific organizational framework, responding instead to the physical drama on display in the limit-testing performances. They interpreted the work variously as one man's attempt “to ease the pain of his experience of death by so numbing his mind and emotional reflexes that he will be incapable of reaction when death really comes along”;⁸² as part of a “strain of bizarre, sado-masochistic exhibitionism that runs through . . . body art”;⁸³ or as “Conceptual Expressionism, a contradiction in terms” for work that “is not strictly theoretical or cool, but anguished, sometimes disgusting, emotional, even hysterical, and usually disturbing on one count or another”; this last reviewer (Acconci's friend John Perreault) concluded that “Acconci's art makes his life more difficult.”⁸⁴

Knowing that Acconci's series of performances began with an exploration of the intertwining feelings of alienation and desire, dependency and aggression, that colored the charged and conflicted relationship between an artist and his public circa 1970 in works like *A Situation Using Streets*, *Walking*, *Running* and *Following Piece*, and that his work repeatedly returned to such questions, repeatedly reestablished the existence of a viewer or an audience for his practice, we might ask, why he would even do the bodily tests. Clearly of the two strands of his practice, they were more affecting or distracting, leading critics toward an interpretation of his work as “expressionist” that he did not want, and leading him, it seems, in his own writings about his work for exhibitions, to write long, abstract, scientific-sounding justifications for his emphasis on adaptation (Acconci's later writing style about his art is much more personal, vulnerable, and reflective⁸⁵). What did spasmodic reflexes and automatically released fluids add that following and crowding people could not convey on their own?

The spasmodic body can be understood in part, as a way of meeting the old modernist goal of impersonality, inherited from Pound and Johns. It seems getting the body to appear as an impersonal material, separated off at least slightly from the performer's intention, was the challenge Acconci took up at the end of a decade when the relatively new genre of

performance art was frequently defined by an uncritical embrace of recognizable objects and culturally established figures from everyday life. How does one make an action immediate, physical, and opaque, rather than imagelike, representational, and transparent to external categories? Acconci's answer: repeat or extend it until it is clear that it has no reachable goal. Acconci might have learned this much from Rainer. Thinking concretely, wanting what he called "real content," or to act "livingly" rather than "artistically," he sought out what qualified as a most basic human action.⁸⁶ All humans do what they are compelled to do: they adapt to circumstances. How could the body's hardwired movement mechanisms be directly accessed? Acconci's answer was to threaten the body with stress. The body spends the bulk of its time preserving and propagating itself. Invoking a Darwinian theory of natural selection that ties physical form in the animal world to instinct and survival, Acconci called on the body's basic motor reflexes to convey a sense of the impersonal, unintended dimensions of embodied life.⁸⁷ To perform adaptation allowed for forms that were both bodily and impersonal; recognizable but beyond the artist's control. Infusing the work of art with accidental gestures produced by the body's prehistoric physiological rules meant that the final material form of the work of art could not be summed up by the conceptual idea-machine that made it. Structure and the body were coming together in the rude concrete signs that Acconci was producing.

Acconci's embrace of the impersonality of adaptation points to an area in his immediate cultural context where questions of the "innate" were prominent. In their parodic exaggeration of the scientific language of behaviorism, Acconci's works and writings could be aligned with the *antibehaviorist* discussion taking place in academic and mainstream venues in the 1960s.⁸⁸ The behaviorism of B. F. Skinner and his followers posited that all human behaviors, including psychological processes, were patterns of conditioned responses to external stimuli (such as Pavlov's famous example of a dog being conditioned to salivate upon hearing a bell).⁸⁹ The overarching objection of philosophers, scientists, and their interpreters was to behaviorism's treatment of human beings as blank slates following the most mechanistic implications of Darwin's theory of evolution. As Arthur Koestler put it in *Ghost in the Machine* (1968), "Behaviorism did away with the concept of mind and put in its place the conditioned-reflex chain."⁹⁰ Noam Chomsky dismantled behaviorism's methods and conclusions in a review of Skinner's *Verbal Behavior* in 1959, arguing with, among other things, Skinner's premise that every expression of desire for something is a direct response to a deprivation of that thing, thus threatening the notion that human beings have any innate verbal capacities, and by implication challenging the existence of a creatively desiring subject.⁹¹ Psychologists following Skinner were seen by these critics to have turned away from notions of introspection and interiorized mental processes such as emotion—which did not make good objects of scientific observation—leading, as early as the 1950s, to jokes among philosophers:

Q: What does one behaviorist say to another when they meet on the street?

A: You're fine. How am I?⁹²

Another voice in the argument against behaviorism that entered the mainstream media in the late 1960s was that of Konrad Lorenz, an Austrian ethologist and best-selling author whose book *On Aggression* (1969) Acconci read.⁹³ For Lorenz, ethology proved, first, that learning is always subject to “phylogenetic” limits—that a body can only learn as much as the equipment inherited from its species will allow.⁹⁴ Secondly, Lorenz maintained, echoing Chomsky, that much as behaviorists would like to drop the concept of the innate, ethological field research has shown that animals are born knowing how to perform many behaviors (or simply begin doing them at the appropriate time without following the example of another animal of their species), some of them extremely complex, such as defense rituals between individual birds.⁹⁵ Lorenz, interviewed in *Harper’s* in May 1968 and in the *New York Times* in July 1970, politically positioned his research on human and animal adaptive behavior against what he saw as the “pseudodemocratic” rhetoric of environmental determinism derived from behaviorist psychology, rejecting the view that “man is nothing more than a creature of his milieu.”⁹⁶ Lorenz argued that such a theory, “comfortable for everybody,” plays into the hand of consumer culture, which profits from an individualizing, isolating model of equality and the belief that if we only construct the right environment around ourselves, we will excel. Lorenz asserted that biological difference and thus unavoidable inequality motivate the formation of the best complex social structures. “Today an attempt is everywhere being made to set up a society composed of manipulable and interchangeable elements,” he complained. If every member of the species had the same scientifically proven behavioral tendencies, then all the better for “the management, the control, of large masses.” But, Lorenz argued, “this egalitarian point of view is completely antibiological.” Lorenz mobilized biology to forward a sense of what in organisms cannot be easily manipulated by external shaping. The high-profile attention he received suggests there was something politically forceful and reassuring at that moment in the idea that systematic manipulation would inevitably fail because not every body would respond to stimulus in the same way—moreover that it would fail whether the “managed” population intended to resist or not, because the bodies with which they were born might not be physically capable of complying. Acconci’s work, like Foucault’s *Discipline and Punish* and Judith Butler’s *Gender Trouble*, on a certain level relishes a similar idea.

Alongside the explanations provided by the exaggerated scientism of “Some Notes on Activity and Performance” and of the text distributed at the *Ongoing Activities and Situations* exhibition, the sweating, flinching, eye-watering, and gagging in Acconci’s performances appears as a similarly parodic performance of “conditioned-reflex chains,” but his reflexes now also point, like antibehaviorist ethology, to the existence of an innate dimension to the body, since they are all unlearned and unintended movements and actions. The marked failure of the body to adapt in these performances of natural selection in real time meant that Acconci’s version of adaptation further conveyed a conviction, similar to Lorenz’s, that a genetically defined physicality has limits. Acconci’s work, like much work circa 1970 on the cusp of the social constructionist shift in worldview that has

tended to dominate artistic and scholarly thought since, was invested, recall, in what he called “structures that limit things” and in what might allow for their transformation.⁹⁷ “It’s harder and harder lately for me to think of doing a specific work unless it’s really going to be a specific work that changes me,” Acconci said in 1971, reflecting the conviction, shared by many feminist artists in his New York context, that such change had to take place at the deepest levels of body and psyche if generations-old patterns were to be broken. In his exploration of the body’s compulsions, reflexes, and limits, Acconci was in search of the moment when exhaustion led to “an opening,” but this exploration was also an alternative way to figure compulsion than the disciplinary. If there was a widespread obsession in the 1970s with structure and system and their determining powers, the body’s physiology—like Robert Smithson’s spiraling crystals or Robert Barry’s radio waves—provided an alternative, inhuman source of abstract, systematic constraint that one was born into and that was *not* a social construction, but which was equally strong.⁹⁸

Acconci’s performances of desire were key to his articulation of embodiment as a connective abstraction insofar as they were not as obviously concerned with the physicality of the body as his limit-testing works. They evoke a version of physical feeling that is harder to see. No trace of the desire that occurred as a physical event in Acconci’s body or in viewers’ bodies in these works is visible in documentation. In the limit tests, viewers see the cause that triggered the body’s response; in the desiring works, they are invited to consider or imagine a movement in response to a desire. Motivated by fairly superficial information, Acconci moves toward a particular person or a particular fantasy of a person. The feeling about a green coat or the face emerging from it that determined the direction taken by works such as *Following Piece* or *Proximity Piece* was not something any viewer of the work could ever access, but the reaching is crucial to the structure of the work, determining the moment when the boundary between the artist and the live, unpredictable, everyday world, or between the idea and its public, is pressed. Even in the works where the person was only imagined, this emphasis on desirable particulars was maintained: the detail that the camera captures in *Twelve Pictures*, or the fetishized articles of clothing in *Specification Piece* and *35 Approaches*.

Acconci’s series as a whole frames the moments directly preceding the reach toward the particular as other physical events, aligning flinching with following, trembling with pointing. He urged his viewer to consider the similarities between adaptive response and desire as kinds of movement. To perform desire in a chain of so many impersonal reflexes is to suggest that desire too is an unintended physical response to the world, to remind viewers that wanting is not something they choose to do or will into being most of the time. Disciplinary structures and the directive powers of personal taste or curiosity or need are made newly parallel, convergent even, in Acconci’s early performance work. But in line with Chomsky’s point against Skinner, he aligned the two in this way not to paint a behaviorist picture of human behavior as mechanical and objective, but rather to frame involuntary movement as it issued from human physicality as a reality that could be relied

upon to motivate human practice in a very different way from any conceptually driven human plan. Acconci's concrete performances were not utopian (in their aggressiveness they often alluded to gendered violence), but as forms they were aligned with a modernist, materialist artistic project that incorporated impersonal, often brutal physical realities but at the same time would not shy away from responsibility for giving form to collective aspirations such as "the desire for consciousness," as Debord phrased it.⁹⁹

The grimness of the body's struggle in much of Acconci's work cannot be denied. Similarly, the feminist critique that Acconci's aggressive reach for his viewers frequently receives or which it is seen to inspire through a performance of symptoms is deserved if we look at certain works in isolation.¹⁰⁰ The strangely comic yet undeniably harsh and aggressively intimate relation to another body that Acconci's work offers embraces art as a site where people, to quote Greenberg once again, "incorporate contemporary feeling," but for Acconci, this includes feelings that can seem quite crude or raw.¹⁰¹ With this inelegant, desperate sensuousness, however, Acconci poses the concrete body not as an opposite to everyday constraining structures but as it is intertwined with them in a practice, as an aspect of everyday life whose reality is undoubtedly determined by constructed limits, but whose struggle with them makes the particularities that it brings to the ring no less true or real.

In the way Acconci thought about transformation circa 1970, he had much in common with fellow New York artist Adrian Piper. The differences between them help to illuminate the two sides of the art historical turning point on which I am trying to situate Acconci's early work. One impersonal, physical characteristic that a body inherits that Acconci's work did not emphasize, but which some of Piper's work did (if obliquely), is skin color. In the period after her participation in *Street Works II*, Piper, then an undergraduate student majoring in philosophy and minoring in medieval and Renaissance musicology, began to make works that had the effect of challenging the rationality of her own and her audience's most deeply ingrained and unquestioned social fears.¹⁰² In the series of street performances she called *Catalysis* (1970–71), she altered her appearance or behavior to make herself repulsive to an audience uninformed that what they were witnessing was art.¹⁰³ In *Catalysis IV*, for example, she stuffed a hand towel into her mouth until her cheeks were bulging and went about her day in the city, riding the bus and visiting the Empire State Building (fig. 104). In another installment she soaked her shirt in a mixture of vinegar, eggs, and cod liver oil designed, she told John Bowles, to "imitate the smell of a homeless person" and then went shopping at Macy's.¹⁰⁴ In another, she played a recording of loud belching from a tape player hidden in her pocket while conducting research at Donnell Library. Key to the effect of all of these performances of a body whose boundaries seemed to be leaking and extruding objects, smells, and sounds—although in fact they were applied from the outside—was Piper's simultaneous physical performance of nonchalance. In a documentary photo of *Catalysis IV*, her relaxed upright posture, polite gesture of crossed wrists, and the simple entitlement that riding the bus implies all

FIGURE 104

Adrian Piper, *Catalysis IV*, 1970.
Performance documentation: five
silver gelatin print photographs,
16 × 16 in (40.6 × 40.6 cm). Detail:
#4 of 5. Collection of the Generali
Foundation, Vienna.



transmit a sense of easy appropriateness. For a single body to communicate both improper bodily leakage and proper ordinariness, even in photographs, is confusing. If the leaky rudeness is clearly a performance aided by props, does that mean the relaxed sitting is not something her body really needs to do either? The body in *Catalysis* seems meant to lead its audience to a conceptual crisis. The ordinary mode takes distance from the repulsive other mode, containing it, and thereby keeping the distanced position open for the audience to occupy. Are a towel in the mouth and smelly clothes really so frightening when they are detached from any other sign of threat? The audience is encouraged to reflect upon precisely what they fear in an aberrant body and ultimately relinquish what Piper called “easily accepted functional identities that no longer exist.”¹⁰⁵ The work’s reliance on normative cultural ideas about bodily fluids and waste allows it to allude to the even more repulsive ideas at the root of bigotry and racism.

Thus like *Proposal #1*, Piper’s *Catalysis* series had a relation to vulnerability unlike that of the art before it. As discussed in the introduction, Acconci, Rainer, Schneemann, and their performers appear vulnerable relative to traditional performance because their bodies appear out of control in some way, with no acknowledgment or context provided

to explain that vulnerability. All three designed choreography that convinces their audiences that a limp wrist, or nervous laughter, or gagging are real expressions of what the body in front of them is feeling on some level. Thus they instill what is clearly a work of art(ifice) with a distinctive physical immediacy, and viewers are meant to appreciate the particular ways the two have been knitted together. Piper, by contrast, makes herself vulnerable by adding objects and substances to the surface of her body that are likely to be viscerally disturbing, thus inviting negative responses from those who encounter her, while simultaneously performing the compensatory behavior of acting nonchalant. As a result, *Catalysis* does not confidently project a notion of embodiment that the audience is meant to claim. Like the iteration of leftist thought in the age of neoliberalism that Wendy Brown describes in *Politics Out of History* (2001), and like Foucault's text quoted earlier in this chapter, Piper's work expresses uncertainty that a notion of embodiment exists that can universally accommodate all bodies.¹⁰⁶ The performance expresses an ambivalence about embodiment that has come to be associated with black Americans' trauma in having the particularities of their bodies lead directly to exploitation, abuse, or death.¹⁰⁷ With this history in mind, Piper's snapshots on the bus invite a comparison with earlier photographs taken after the successful Montgomery bus boycott in 1956 (fig. 105). Piper's performance exaggerates the concept of otherness, evoking how much has not yet changed fourteen years on in public social life for people of color. Skin color, unlike physical fitness or eye sensitivity, is an unintended physical trait that should not exert any constraint upon what a body is capable of achieving, but which does because of the cultural construction of racial hierarchies.



FIGURE 105

Rosa Parks riding on a newly integrated bus in Montgomery, Alabama, following the end of the 381-day Montgomery Bus Boycott, December 26, 1956. Photo by Donald Cravens. The NYPL-PALIFE Images Collection, Getty Images.

Acconci's early works offered a body that in its repulsive and offensive aspects was seemingly inseparable from the body that desires. His position was entitled, to be sure, reflecting most white Americans' relatively fortunate experience of state-sanctioned bodily coercion circa 1970—as deployment to Vietnam, at worst, but more often as bureaucratic discipline or ill-fitting norms rather than the threat of lynching. But Acconci's sense of entitlement allows the work to also convey a conviction that embodiment is a generalized abstraction—with limits *and* capacities—not specific to any race. We all flinch when hit with a ball, and Acconci's work takes that premise seriously. Piper's *Catalysis* belongs to a chapter of art history in which identity categories and their imbrication in ongoing histories of oppression became the primary aspect of public understanding that artists felt they must address. Feminist works such as Schneemann's later performances of the 1970s, Rainer's films of the 1980s and '90s, and even Acconci's explorations of gender in works such as *Conversions* (1971), *Seedbed* (1972) and *Supply Room* (1972) all belonged to this newer conversation.¹⁰⁸ We cannot and would not want to go back to a time when the specific histories of violence in modernity were less talked about. The 1960s were such a time, but they were also a period when articulating the beliefs that motivated social and political desires was the priority, and when abstract languages seemed necessary for that articulation. This book is written in the hope that after several decades of work bringing denied histories to light and putting categories based on shallow understandings of bodily difference to rest—work that is necessarily ongoing—artists and intellectuals are again seeking ways of giving form to what they think is right, using terms that neither retreat with relativist qualifications from the possibility of sympathy, nor steel themselves rigidly against debate and revision.

Forces beyond the individual will that make humans move and to which they adapt—these were what drove Acconci's art for the several years that this chapter has been considering. Acconci, like Debord, responded to a situation in which “man is more and more, and ever more powerfully, the producer of every detail of his world”—which is to say, images and relationships in the surrounding culture seemed increasingly intended, planned, purposed toward the ends of consumer capitalism. In such a context, Acconci's involuntary movement appeared as a powerful sister term, a presentation from the midst of so many mediating routines, mimeographed sheets of paper, photographs, film reels, and videotapes of a level of concrete life in the world that human beings did not produce, but which compelled and determined how they could act as much as any cultural construction. Spectacle could touch and image these negative, physical dimensions of life, but it could never fully grasp them. They had the potential to break the system down through collapse, of course, but they were also what compelled a human actor toward You, toward negotiation, toward an impersonal and unifying form of public love. Unintended physical compulsions dialectically shaping and shaped by constructed social conventions constitute the everyday life of the concrete body, the basis of a practice in which material struggle and desire constitute only two—but two fundamental—reasons to move.

Coda

Forming the Senses

TO JENNY

I

*Jenny! Teasingly you may inquire
Why my songs "To Jenny" I address,
When for you alone my pulse beats higher,
When my songs for you alone despair,
When you only can their heart inspire,
When your name each syllable must confess,
When you lend each note melodiousness,
When no breath would stray from the Goddess?
'tis because so sweet the dear name sounds,
And its cadence says so much to me,
And so full, so sonorous it resounds,
Like to vibrant Spirits in the distance,
Like the gold-stringed Cithern's harmony,
Like some wondrous, magical existence.*

II

*See! I could a thousand volumes fill,
Writing only "Jenny" in each line,
Still they would a world of thought conceal,
Deed eternal and unchanging Will,
Verses sweet that yearning gently still,
All the glow and all the Aether's shine,
Anguished sorrow's pain and joy divine,
All of Life and Knowledge that is mine.
I can read it in the stars up yonder,
From the Zephyr it comes back to me,
From the being of the wild waves' thunder.
Truly, I would write it down as a refrain,
For the coming centuries to see—
LOVE IS JENNY, JENNY IS LOVE's NAME*

—Karl Marx, "To Jenny," *Book of Songs*, 1836.

MARX'S ABSTRACTION

A key feature of the modernist model of art that I have been trying to describe in this book is its embrace of alternative abstractions to those that capitalist consumer culture imposes upon everyday life. The artwork's structuring relationship between materials and concepts is what articulates this abstraction. Part of the appeal of abstraction in the twentieth century more broadly was that it could speak the artist's aim for a universal address, which is to say an understanding of the audience for one's art to be "everyone" to the same extent that the quantifying abstraction of money was meant to be everyone's measure of value in capitalist modern life. Artists have drawn on the fact that everyone has grappled with unfamiliar arrangements of familiar shapes with at least one of their senses, for example, whether on a flat surface, in the movements of another's body, or as sounds in the air. The kind of abstraction that art subscribes to or expresses is fundamentally different from the abstractions of capitalist consumer culture because it is inextricably tied to material particulars. Art takes as a given that there is a difference between the physical world and ideas, and reveals its great strength when it deals with ideas or structuring concepts that are based in needs and desires in the physical world. Its abstraction is embodied and concrete and speaks to a history of shared need rather than only to the categories of shared

thought. The role of this concrete abstraction is sometimes difficult for people who have studied something other than art to trust, or even see; but at the same time it is such a given for people accustomed to thinking about art that its dialectical challenge to the categories of thought often flash by without anyone using them to put pressure on the language-about-language logic that dominates conversations in academia both in and outside the discipline of art history. Art's insights remain private, when what is needed is their translation into a publicly recognizable language.

To give us a sense of the work such translation might offer, we might look to some of Karl Marx's early writings. A love poem, for example, that the young Marx wrote to his future wife connects the specific person Jenny von Westphalen to an expansive notion of love.¹ Jenny's name alone evokes "pain," "joy divine," and "All of Life and Knowledge that is mine" because for the singer "*JENNY IS LOVE'S NAME*." The poem pairs self-affirmation with an invitation to "See!" a wider "world of thought," aware that the feeling for the specific Jenny matters only insofar as it connects the lover with the reader's love—with all love at the moment of recognizing itself among the objective forces of nature. Whether writing about love in this early example or, later, about history, "species being," labor, communism, or need as "the first premise of all human existence," Marx constantly works up notions that intertwine generalizing concepts with concrete particularity, asking us to think on both registers simultaneously, rather than transcend the mundane on the plane of a brittle ideal or wallow unreflectively in the immediacy of embodied experience.²

This dialectical relationship, so central to Marx's thought, is very similar to the form of abstraction at work in modernist works of art. Focusing on an additional example from Marx's discussion of historical method in *The German Ideology* (1845) can perhaps further bring home the high stakes of this foundational modernist principle.³ By Marx's thinking, a society cannot construct a true and useful history for itself by imposing a grand, idealized narrative onto events, nor by stringing the endless details of human activity into a formless one-dimensional line. A comprehensive historical narrative can be accurate and supportive of social understanding and action only if it is derived from what we can observe in everyday material existence and its traces. Such a method is opposed to one that posits life as a mere echo or reflection of ideology: "Life is not determined by consciousness," Marx wrote, "but consciousness by life." Marx's argument is at greater pains to emphasize material particulars than totalizing generalities, but we should note that notions such as "human history," "the social structure and the State," and "the production of ideas, of conceptions, of consciousness" are not thrown out. His priority is to show how they are all "at first directly interwoven with the material activity and the material intercourse of men," not to prove such ideas and structures irrelevant, but rather to propose how they might play a more relevant role in the very historical processes that they describe and from which they emerge, insofar as "men . . . alter, along with this their real existence, their thinking and the products of their thinking." In other words, only a method that generated its totalizing structuring frameworks from the facts of "material

intercourse” could hope to not only accurately represent but directly contribute to the historical development of communism.

Marx’s commitment to concrete political change led him to stop writing poetry near the end of the 1830s in order to focus his energies on writing a critical analysis of the bourgeois class and the capitalist system it invented.⁴ Such a shift might lead us to downplay the role of the aesthetic in Marx’s thinking, but in his *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts* of 1844, he provides a specifically aesthetic justification for the importance of material, lived facts to his model of progressive history, reminding us that his ideas about sensuous activity and understanding were central in the formation of his critical position. In the section now called “Private Property and Communism,” Marx wrote that the primary goal for the ideal society he called communism would be the production of richly sensitive human beings, or what he called “the rich man profoundly endowed with all the senses.”⁵ A fully endowed person does not approach the objects of the world, including other persons, simply to use or consume them, but rather “appropriates” them, using whichever of her “essential powers”—or senses, understood both bodily and socially—are suited to the “affirmation” of each object in its particularity. Importantly, such appropriation, and the cultivation that it entailed of a capacity for receiving the world in ever more nuanced ways, was understood to be a collective practice: “The forming of the five senses,” Marx wrote, “is a labor of the entire history of the world down to the present.”

Though I am most interested in the ways Marx used the terms *appropriation* and *affirmation*, it is important in the context of a discussion about the persistence of modernist painterly aesthetics during the rise of postmodernism that he also framed social practice as a process of “humaniz[ing] nature.” When he evoked the human in 1844, Marx meant most of all to remind his readers of their collective social selves, not of the individual mastery that postmodernism associates negatively with liberal humanism. Language is intensely human in this model, as the vehicle of communication and thus social form. To humanize through appropriation, for Marx, is not to name and divide one set of beings from another, but rather to objectively realize each of our differently attuned senses in the objects of the world that draw out and thereby affirm them through such sensuously attuned attention: the senses “relate themselves to the thing for the sake of the thing, but the thing itself is an objective human relation to itself and to man.” Indeed, mankind’s “own sensuousness first exists as human sensuousness for himself through the *other* man.” A rich experience of one’s senses is to experience them as shareable, to expect that others will recognize our perception as significant and important, too, should we represent it.⁶ Ultimately, members of a Communist society, Marx hoped, would experience such affirmation of the objects in the world, and of their own being through such affirmation, to satisfy a need. Marx used the word *need* repeatedly in his efforts to distinguish private property under capitalism from the kind of having that would exist within communism. As Adolfo Sánchez Vázquez explains about the *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts*, for Marx, “wealth is measured . . . by the extent to which [one] feels the need to appropriate

reality in an infinite number of ways.”⁷ If possession, like consumption, is a means to stop paying attention to the object in the world, to contain and bring to an end our experience of its particularity, appropriation opens onto further adjustment as our senses sharpen in relation to the traits of the object to which they attend. Indeed it was the specific ways of sensing and how much they mattered that distinguished Communist appropriation from private property. Marx writes of “The *manner* in which they become *his*” and “the *determinate nature* of this relationship which shapes the particular, *real* mode of affirmation.” *How* the constant challenge of the world’s particulars is met, the conflicted dialogue through which what is most deeply sensible in them is shared and agreed upon and affirmed—these are inseparable from any idea we might have of this activity, and make it fundamentally social.

Vázquez’s insight comes from his book *Art and Society*—written during the early 1960s, when Yvonne Rainer was first making dances—on the role Marx’s aesthetic ideas played in his “philosophy of praxis,” “a praxis which aims to transform human reality radically . . . so as to establish a society in which humanity can give free reign to its essential powers, frustrated, denied, postponed, and emasculated for so long.”⁸ Rehearsing a familiar Marxist formulation, Vázquez explains that in capitalist society, the “loss of humanity takes place in work,” but he ties work firmly to “aesthetic creation,” calling it “the sphere . . . in which man should affirm his humanity” (47). In defining humanity, he links “artistic creation in particular, and the aesthetic relation to things in general” as “two of the most highly developed means by which man confirms himself in the objective world” (78). Aesthetic practice—or the “integration” of “mere physical reality” into “a world of human meanings”—was a “stronghold, . . . an essential sphere, of human existence” (89, 47).

Vázquez’s view of Marx’s early writings on the aesthetic supports the present study’s understanding of art as a site where people make objects, images, and performances that, like historical description, represent or give form to the challenges, struggles, achievements, and tragedies that matter most to life in a physical world—categories that are necessarily shifting and contingent upon the artist and her context. Art does this not through narrative, however, but through means that are physical and concrete. Art is sensuous; even when not overtly physical, as in conceptual art, it engages its viewers on a level of embodied understanding, asking them to think about junctures between concept and world, idea and body, or abstract and concrete. Art thus is a place for humans to exercise their capacity for kinds of signification more concrete and physical than language and thus more unstable, often more condensed, more subjective, and therefore more prone to discussion and disagreement. Art’s sensuousness, like the world’s, calls out for language, for further representation, for sociality. When it is good, it gives people something they want to gather around and try to understand—something in relation to which they want to make themselves understood. It bears repeating that such social activity is precisely what spectacle would eliminate from practice if it could.

SPIRALING DOWN

It would be misleading to suggest that the modernist model of art did anything other than recede in the decades immediately following the 1960s, as the art world embraced the critical edge of Betye Saar's armed Aunt Jemimas and Sherrie Levine's rephotographs of modernist masterpieces. Rainer's work from these years contributed to the new sensibility. In the mid-1970s she stopped making dances and turned her attention to film, actively participating in the feminist discourse that examined and interrogated conventions of narrative, gender construction, and the power dynamics represented by the camera's gaze. She made wittily scripted but flat-toned, often theoretically challenging feminist films about racial conflict, gender, sexuality, aging, and illness in Western culture. During this period, she came out as a lesbian and survived breast cancer—both experiences informing films in which the subject matter referred to contemporary political conflicts as much or more than the form. Rainer started staging dances again in 2000, and this return has opened her work more directly to the abstraction afforded when the body is the material, inviting us to consider what an adaptation of the modernist model of art for the twenty-first century might be.

Rainer began making dances when ballet celebrity Mikhail Baryshnikov, fourteen years her junior and an adoring fan of the idea of the Judson Dance Theater since his youth, asked her to restage some of her past work with his balletic modern dance company, the White Oak Dance Project.⁹ The result was a compilation of her Judson choreography *After Many a Summer Dies the Swan*, performed by White Oak in 2000. Rainer has said the return to dance in 2000 felt like coming home.¹⁰ It seems that Baryshnikov asking Rainer to function as a historical object inspired her to ask herself who she had reckoned with in the formation of her own choreographic language, leading to two dances that she calls the "Indexicals." These appropriate, parody, and pay homage to two dances from the past: George Balanchine's spare, linear ballet *Agon* (1957) and Vaslav Nijinsky's primitivist collaboration with Igor Stravinsky, *The Rite of Spring* (1913). Rainer's works were correspondingly called *AG Indexical (with a Little Help from H.M.)* (2006) and *RoS Indexical* (2007). Unlike Baryshnikov, she could not call up her ancestors and have them teach her company their work. The choreography of the earlier dances could only be learned as mediated through video, film, photography, and written notes, and both *AG Indexical* and *RoS Indexical* incorporate such documentation into the dance. A video of a performance of *Agon* is brought onstage so that the dancers in *AG* can follow along at one point, for example, and a BBC nonfiction film about the uproar Nijinsky and Stravinsky caused in 1913, *Riot at the Rite* (2005), is used as the sound track and score for *RoS*. To call the new dances "indexical" is to liken them to photographs, bearing an indexical or directly imprinted relation to the objects they represent. If so, they are photographs of photographs that have already transformed the original artwork they represent.

With *Spiraling Down*, the third installment in this series, Rainer did not adopt another finished work but constructed her dance from an array of cultural sources made available through photographic media from the past hundred years (fig. 106). Standing for

the everyday in this more recent choreography was not the laboring body or the intimate, introverted body of *Trio A* but the outwardly presentational bodies of popular entertainment from throughout the twentieth century—soccer players, an aging ballroom dancer, stage and screen stars such as Sarah Bernhardt and Steve Martin, among others.¹¹ In preparation for the choreographic process, Rainer and the four dancers she worked with on *AG Indexical*, *RoS Indexical*, and *Spiraling Down*—Pat Catterson, Emily Coates, Patricia Hoffbauer, and Sally Silvers—compiled thick files of images drawn from the media and mined YouTube as a movement resource, meticulously imitating the dribbling and head butting, hip swiveling, heart clutching, hand slapping, and other physical gags, affectations, mannerisms, and countenances that their selected ancestors had used to entertain their audiences.

FIGURE 106

Yvonne Rainer, *Spiraling Down*, 2008. Rehearsal at the Baryshnikov Arts Center, New York, 2009. Performers, left to right: Pat Catterson, Patricia Hoffbauer, Sally Silvers, and Emily Coates. Photo by Paula Court, Courtesy of Performa.

The optimistic embrace of spectacular form and its imprint on bodily comportment built directly into the baseline structure of *Spiraling Down* surprises when compared to Rainer's work from the 1960s. Rainer had brought images from the media and nondance formats into her performances before, but usually in a supplementary way, almost serving as backdrop. *The Mind Is a Muscle* (1968) included a wide array of found figures and other references to the world around it: Harry de Dio, the professional juggler, for example, safely



sanctioned to his half of the stage while the avant-garde dancers took turns directing each other into tableaux arrangements using swings and a gymnastics mat as props (fig. 107); two short films that Rainer made of a hand and some feet kicking a volleyball projected on a screen; a series of slides of images taken from magazines (Lenny Bruce lying dead and animals in Africa, among others); and a big sheet of Mylar that dropped down briefly from overhead, its ultra-shiny surface reflecting a warped image of everything around it (fig. 108). Except for some brief moments in which a dancer copied a pose from a photograph of Nijinsky, however, the movement going on around and in front of these additions was always derived from Rainer's own body or her score—her own creative invention, taught to the dancers, or theirs, spontaneously invented in accord with her rules—and as such set against the representatives from the image world that filtered in around it.¹²

What are we to make of *Spiraling Down's* dutiful copying of codes from popular culture? Isn't Rainer's postmodern sampling from such a variety of sources akin to shopping, or the presentations of personal taste we are repeatedly encouraged by social media to compile in self-identification, aligning the gestures of athletes and celebrities like so many equivalent products, movies, or favorite songs? Alternatively, if the coded movements lose their identity as products in the process of translation, isn't Rainer, by transforming them into dance, just making spectacle and the hegemony and loss it stands for more palatable, "re-appropriating the product system," as Michel de Certeau so deflatingly and influentially encouraged his readers to do in the late 1960s?¹³ How is Rainer's strategy so different from the "markets . . . that use art to humanize, to make a veneer for a brutal monetized system," invoked in a more recent discussion of obstacles facing contemporary artists?¹⁴ Rainer's manner of appropriation risked all of these varieties of disingenuous leveling, but as I hope to make clear, her methods resulted finally in a performance that was different from a simple, symptomatic reproduction of market operations. The difference hinged on the transformation of the codes at the level of the body, on the skill Rainer brings to her craft of choreographing movement for groups; in other words, by allowing the specificity of her performers' bodies to come forward and become visible. If *Trio A* had offered the

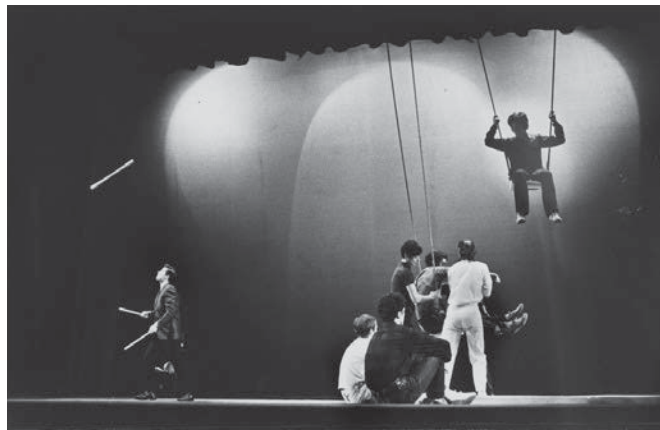


FIGURE 107

Yvonne Rainer, "Act," from *The Mind is a Muscle*, 1968. Anderson Theater, New York. Photo by Julie Abeles. Yvonne Rainer Papers, Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles.

FIGURE 108

Peter Moore, performance view of Yvonne Rainer's *The Mind Is a Muscle*, 1968. Anderson Theater, New York. Yvonne Rainer Papers, Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles.



ordinary body as a sort of universal outside history, longer works like *The Mind Is a Muscle* were, as Catterson would say, “cognizant of history” largely through the inclusion of films and photographs, but history remained something against or to the side of critical embodiment.¹⁵ *Spiraling Down* builds away from both of these earlier approaches by placing historical and bodily particularity on equal footing. The references to past, mediated moments from popular culture become opportunities for each dancer’s particular appropriation of the world to come forward.



Spiraling Down is a dance for four women in four different decades of their lives.¹⁶ (Keith Sabado has acted as a substitute when one of the original dancers was unavailable, and he appears in some of the photographs included here.) It is a dance that is intently aware of time—of memory, aging, and decline. Its title, oddly prescient, was devised just before the economic collapse splashed those words all over the news in the fall of 2008. The account offered here is based on a live performance at REDCAT theater in Los Angeles in June 2009, a videotape of the premiere at Yale University’s World Performance Project in November 2008, and a live performance at the Baryshnikov Arts Center (BAC) in New York in March 2011, viewed in that order.¹⁷

The dance begins with a recorded quotation about memory read by Rainer from offstage over the sound system, while bright, warm lights go up on a freeze-frame reconstruction of a historic photograph of a Merce Cunningham dance from 1956, *Suite for Five*.¹⁸ “We, amnesiacs all,” Rainer gently announces, “condemned to live in an eternally fleeting present, have created the most elaborate of human constructions, memory, to buffer ourselves against the intolerable knowledge of the irreversible passage of time and the irretrievability of its moments and events.”¹⁹ For two seconds the audience takes in four evenly spaced people carved into Cunningham’s extended, perfectly balanced architectural shapes, and then the lights go down. Rainer then begins reading from Haruki Murakami’s memoir *What I Talk about When I Talk about Running* (2008) on how he began

FIGURE 109

Yvonne Rainer, *Spiraling Down*, 2008. New Theater, World Performance Project (WPP), Yale University, November 2008. Still from video by WPP. Performers: Emily Coates, Sally Silvers, Keith Sabado, Patricia Hoffbauer.



seriously running for exercise and marathons at approximately the same time that he first began to write with any discipline, at age thirty-three—"the age that Jesus Christ died."²⁰ This text becomes the sound track for a series of old 1960s choreography sequences by Rainer and Steve Paxton—tasklike traveling movements along the back edge and along the diagonal—that lasts six minutes or so. Then, Murakami text still rolling, the dancers spread out and begin to imitate professional soccer players on a field, not as they would appear at the high points of the game but when waiting to be engaged (fig. 109). They stand around, stretching, scratching, shaking the kinks out of arms or legs, or hover with knees bent and hands clasped as if alert and at the ready—unheroic participants in a collective enterprise that is also their job.²¹

After a while, the soccer sidelines movement begins to be inflected with a call-and-response session centered around the names of various recent and not-so-recent technologies. The dancers each take turns shouting the name of a technology, and pause to arrange themselves into a pose or brief vignette vaguely resembling dance, sports, or pantomimes of violence (fig. 110). Then they all yell back a positive or negative opinion about the technology in unison. "Blackberry?" "Dump them all!" "YouTube?" "Hurray!" "Filofax?" "Bring it back!" "Facebook?" "I don't know, there's something very disturbing about Facebook . . ." This last line is pronounced not in unison but as a jumble of uncertain muttering. Near the end of this section, they turn and face directly forward to do a series of fairly rapid, unconnected tableaux (not interspersed with soccer shuffling), freezing in melodramatic poses with extended arms or cocked hips and hyperexpressive faces that bring home to the audience that all of the still moments in this section have been taken from photographs (fig. 111). By the end of the first half of *Spiraling Down*, then, the

FIGURE 110

Yvonne Rainer, *Spiraling Down*, 2008. Baryshnikov Arts Center, New York, 2009. Photo by Andrea Geyer.



FIGURE 111

Yvonne Rainer, *Spiraling Down*, 2008. Rehearsal at the Baryshnikov Arts Center, New York, 2009. Performers, left to right: Patricia Hoffbauer, Pat Catterson, Sally Silvers, and Emily Coates. Photo by Paula Court, Courtesy of Performa.



following themes have been brought into the playing space in both physical and verbal/conceptual ways: (1) the body as something that can be intentionally transformed, but also something that ages in ways that are beyond individual control; (2) the history of dance and tasklike choreography as Rainer's contribution to that history; (3) sports as a category of movement within the contemporary bodily lexicon that involves extraordinary skill, tasks, and tasklike movement; and (4) the body in photography and other current technologies.

The second half of *Spiraling Down* is much more musical than the first, with a sound track taken up largely by Maurice Ravel's *Bolero* (composed to accompany a ballet in 1928) supplemented with texts by various authors including Sylvia Plath, Marcel Mauss, and a former boyfriend of Rainer's writing about his diminishing sex drive, periodically read by one of the dancers at a podium.²² When not reading, the dancers for the most part hang together in a clump that moves slowly about the stage in an irregular, nonsynchronized movement that Rainer calls "bobbling" after the bobble-head dolls sports fans and others now collect (fig. 112). Pretending to practice soccer moves with an imaginary ball, they kick, head-butt, thrust their chests out, jab shoulders up or forward, pivot, dip, and hop around the space to the music's relentless drum beat, facing into or away from the center of the clump, somehow managing not to jostle each other too much. The rhythm, again, is irregular; they are each moving up and down according to their own imaginary needs, each with her own imaginary ball, but they stay together, moving around the stage in a hop-step-step fashion, never on the beat, but somehow consistent with the spirit of the beat of *Boléro's* repetitive tune, dumbly building to its embarrassing, predictable, magnificent climax.

After the dancers have been doing the bobbling movement long enough for it to feel established as a structuring formation, they begin to break away from—or simply stop in



FIGURE 112
Yvonne Rainer, *Spiraling Down*,
2008. New Theater, World
Performance Project (WPP), Yale
University, November 2008. Still
from video by WPP.

the middle of—the clump to do more precisely quoted movement from cultural sources for a few seconds or minutes before returning to the group bobble (see fig. 106). The sources for the quotations include but are not limited to the following, all of which are listed in the audience’s program: (1) a videotape of Catterson’s ninety-three-year-old mother, Ideen Catterson, formerly a professional ballroom dancer, doing small, hip-rocking steps in the living room of her rest home shortly before she died; (2) Steve Martin in Carl Reiner’s 1984 Hollywood movie *All of Me*, pretending to be half occupied by the spirit of a woman played by Lily Tomlin; (3) a section of very stylized theatrical movement performed by Sarah Bernhardt in the 1912 silent film *Queen Elizabeth*; and (4) a two-person bit of choreography from Slavko Vorkapich’s 1930s film *The Furies* that involves one person acting like a scary monster and chasing the other, who melodramatically flees (fig. 113).²³

SPIRALING DOWN

Commissioned by the J. Paul Getty Museum, Getty Research Institute, and World Performance Project at Yale.

World Premiere: New Theater, Yale University, November 14, 2008

Dancers: Pat Catterson, Emily Coates, Patricia Hoffbauer, Yvonne Rainer, and Sally Silvers

Sound and movement sources, references, and inspirations:

Fred Astaire, Sarah Bernhardt, John Bottomley, Pierre Boulez, Carolyn Brown, Merce Cunningham, Ideen Catterson, Pat Catterson, Cyd Charisse, Anna Chirescu, Emily Coates, Jared Diamond, Barbara Dilley, Viola Farber, Harun Farocki, Mané Garrincha, Caryn Heilman, Patricia Hoffbauer, Dong Jun, Gene Kelly, Melanie King, Alla Kudryavtseva, Steve Martin, Marcel Mauss, Vsevolod Meyerhold, Haruki Murakami, New York Philharmonic, David Paterson, Steve Paxton, Elvis Presley, Vaslav Nijinsky, Pelé, Sylvia Plath, Ivan Rainer, Jeannette Rainer, Yvonne Rainer, Maurice Ravel, Jerome Robbins, Ted Shawn, Sally Silvers, Geoffrey Sonnebend, Sony Classics, Sony Licensing, Preston Sturges, Nina Theilade, Lily Tomlin, Hannah Varga, Slavko Vorkapich, Daniel Wemp, Serena Williams, George Zoritch.

Music Consultant: Pat Catterson

Lighting Designer: Les Dickert

Stage Manager: Rebecca Sealander

Sound Engineer: Quentin Chiappetta

Special thanks to: Andrew W Mellon Foundation, Baryshnikov Dance Foundation, Laurel Kishi, Andrew Perchuck, Joseph Roach, Emily Coates, Kathryn Krier, Simon Leung, Esa Nickle, Performa 09.

+++

IN CONJUNCTION WITH THESE PERFORMANCES, REDCAT AND THE GETTY RESEARCH INSTITUTE HOST CONVERSATIONS WITH THE ARTISTS.

Thursday, June 25

Post-performance conversation moderated by Roger Copeland

Dancers Emily Coates, Patricia Hoffbauer, and Sally Silvers return to the stage for a moderated conversation with dance and theater scholar Roger Copeland and Yvonne Rainer. With Copeland they discuss the collaborative process of creating Rainer’s works, and the experience of performing them, from the dancers’ perspectives.

Saturday, June 27, 6:00 PM

Robert Storr in conversation with Yvonne Rainer

Prior to the Saturday evening performance, artist and critic Robert Storr holds a public conversation with Yvonne Rainer. Focusing on Rainer’s enormous impact on postwar art, the conversation explores her engagement with multiple avant-garde art practices and their political and aesthetic possibilities. Free, for reservations call 213-237-2800.

FIGURE 113

Program for Yvonne Rainer: “RoS Indexical” and “Spiraling Down” at REDCAT, Los Angeles, June 25–28, 2009, detail.

No specified musical cue determines when the dancers perform the appropriated movements, but a set of rules structures their choices, much like a game. Rainer and the dancers worked together in rehearsals to link all of the movement quotations together into what they called a “mama phrase” that everyone learned, which does have a set sequence. In performance, though, the different quotations assert themselves in a collage-like fashion; the dancers may choose to break out of the bobbling clump at any time and perform a segment of the mama phrase from any starting point before returning to the soccer moves that are the basic bobbling motion. When one dancer starts a phrase, another may choose to join her for part or all of it, or she may do another movement that takes her close enough to interact with the other dancer in some way.²⁴ With the “Furies” phrase, which involves two people, it becomes apparent that a dancer is obliged to perform the “fleeing” role if she is called into it by someone adopting the “aggressing” monster role. The second half of *Spiraling Down* is thus characterized by cycles of coming together and moving away, which make it appear as a more unified whole than the first half, with its many discrete elements. The bobbling mass is always in movement, progressing around the stage, providing the sense of a firm but fluid structure that makes room for improvised individual choices about timing and spacing, but which places clear limits on the range of actions any one person may choose to perform.

For an example of how Rainer’s distinctive form of appropriation plays out, we can look at the Steve Martin sequence. The movement on stage seems to have been taken from the section of *All of Me* in which Martin has just discovered that his body is partly occupied by the spirit of Tomlin (fig. 114).²⁵ Martin’s performance in the scene is a hilarious parody of gender, as one body tries to perform what it would be like to have one half of his body exaggeratedly masculine and the other half exaggeratedly feminine. It is also an example—as in so much physical comedy and in so much of Rainer’s dance—of a body that appears vulnerable because it is slightly out of control. Martin’s wild walk, meant



FIGURE 114

All of Me, 1984, directed by Carl Reiner, video still. Performer: Steve Martin. A Stephen Friedman/Kings Road production, cinematography by Richard H. Kline.

to convey two mechanically unmoored halves, is in the *Spiraling Down* version a reaching, stomping, somewhat flailing advance—still fairly close to the original, but without any context to explain it (fig. 115). The differences increase, however, when it comes time to imitate the moment of Martin’s shtick in which he stands in a wide lunge, gripping a railing to anchor one half of his body against the pull of the other half, as the Tomlin character is supposed to be trying to walk in the opposite direction. This stance only gives way once Martin’s female hand mercilessly slaps the anchoring male hand until it lets go. When Rainer’s dancers do this section, by contrast, the comedy largely recedes. They swiftly jump, rather than dragging their back legs behind them, and Martin’s mad rant at his own Tomlin-occupied hand becomes, to the tune of the *Bolero*, a graceful turn inward, face and waving fingers mutually acknowledging each other. Thus even though Rainer has instructed the dancers to learn the movement precisely, and all to do it exactly the same way (she has a reputation for being a strict taskmaster), they look very different from Steve Martin and very different from each other, due to the contingencies of age, of their dance background, and so on.²⁶

To foreground the particulars of her individual dancers’ bodily qualities, Rainer selected dancers and costumes for *Spiraling Down* that do not appear easily categorizeable or reducible to previously established identities. The four women in *Spiraling Down* range from thirty-something to sixty-something, and each has roots in a different dance tradition: Catterson, in her sixties, is a modern dancer strongly influenced by the Judson Dance Theater in the late 1960s; Silvers, in her fifties, studied modern dance, but renounced technique class of any kind in the 1980s and committed herself to learning through improvisation; Hoffbauer, in her forties, is a modern dancer from Brazil who trained in the tradition of Twyla Tharp there and in New York; and Coates, in her thirties, danced for the New York City Ballet company and Baryshnikov’s White Oak Dance Project before she began working with Rainer.²⁷



FIGURE 115
Yvonne Rainer, *Spiraling Down*,
2008. New Theater, World
Performance Project (WPP), Yale
University, November 2008. Still
from video by WPP.

In *Spiraling Down* the four women wear what look like the most casual of workout clothes, or unmatched doing-the-laundry clothes: long Bermuda shorts; red boyshorts under a flimsy, shiny skirt with an uneven hem; a jersey for a nonexistent “California” sports team. All wear shirts that for the most part stay loose and androgynous, not emphasizing breasts or waistline. Their hodgepodge wardrobe evokes the realm of the cast-off commodity—a uniform for a Salvation Army. The four women do not look like typical dancers, but they do not look like typical middle-aged women either. Nor do they look like children.²⁸ When Sabado filled in for Catterson, it extended *Spiraling Down*’s range of complex bodily signifieds to include “maleness,” which is of course not to say straightforward masculinity. To have questions about identity hover over the performers forces viewers to pay closer attention as efforts to classify and name fail, forcing us to simply let visual data imprint and accumulate in a public encounter with a group of live strangers whose bodies—and this is what always separates performance from everyday life, but which so few artists take advantage of—we are invited to stare at.

The differences between the four dancers’ styles and habits of comportment is striking. Silvers moves in a comic, bawdy, precise-but-seemingly-awkward way, without ever turning a hammy face to the audience. Most of her expressiveness resides in the body; her face usually appears seriously concentrated. Hoffbauer’s movement is muscular and reads as passionately deliberate, determined, earnest, not expecting anything she does to be found particularly funny—she seems to fling her body out of control without ever really letting go of her command over it. Coates is erect and meticulous, at ease but disciplined, her serene white face offering no commentary on her body’s exertions, and her balletic “presentational” quality often bumps up against the ordinary things she is asked to do in interesting ways.²⁹ Catterson dances with the bodily affect of a very tall eight-year-old: confident and amused by the whole context, occasionally impatient to get where she knows she needs to go; she is casual but never sloppy, in a way that registers her internalization of the Judson commitment to the ordinary-as-beautiful.³⁰ Rainer, who filled in for Catterson at the REDCAT performance, looked grounded and happy, agile even when the minor stiffness of aging stopped a movement short of full extension; her lively face often expressed pleasure in what her body was doing, either through an overt, vulnerable joy, or a kind of ironic screw-you-you’ll-be-old-someday-too nonchalance.

The dance winds down after the Bolero climax, in silence, with Hoffbauer performing the last thirty seconds of *Trio A* backward alongside three different (less readily recognizable) sequences by the others.³¹ The dance seems to be using *Trio A* in this way to reach back through time, ending when each dancer finally places herself carefully back into one of the four positions of the *Suite for Five* photograph with which they began, Hoffbauer and Silvers in switched places on the arc this time (fig. 116). For a couple of seconds, we take in this view that the dance’s spiral offers of Rainer’s teacher as it passes by again. Then the lights go out.

FIGURE 116

Yvonne Rainer, *Spiraling Down*, 2008. New Theater, World Performance Project (WPP), Yale University, November 2008. Still from video by WPP.



SPIRALING IN HISTORY

In a modernist painting such as Henri Matisse's *The Dance* (1909–10), the artist aims to give shareable form to the meanings found and aspired to in his society's sensuous experience through an arrangement of shapes and colors meant to speak a new but universally affecting visual language appropriate for modern people (fig. 117).³² He tempers the schematic aspects of his picture with signs of bodily specificity in his figures' differently shaped shoulders, breasts, and abdomens, and in the way their various lungings and leanings do seem to belong to a physical world governed by gravity and mass. Nevertheless, they are general humans, not indicating much about what makes life particular in France in 1910. For many in later generations, including those working in the 1950s and '60s, who did not share Matisse's belief in a time-spanning, indeed primitivist, decorative aesthetic, Matisse's painting did not provide a model they could apply to their experience.

The dancers in a classic Cunningham work such as *Suite for five* are similarly general.³³ Cunningham's dancers seem uniformly capable of making any shape, moving at any speed, or jumping as many times as the choreography asks. Yet at the same time, unlike ballet dancers, they show the effort required for all of it—sweating, taking measures to maintain balance, occasionally allowing their feet to thud loudly on the floor. Without narrative and set to John Cage's melodyless music, *Suite for five's* only detectable reason for being is to give form to the labor of dancing. In its biomechanical matter-of-factness, a Cunningham dance stands abstractly for human activity in general, partaking in the notion of a body within a structure at the core of the understanding of everyday life that connects the performance artists in this book, but with a greater autonomy from the ordinary world, which draws it back closer to the art of the first half of the twentieth century.

The quality that Rainer originally admired in Cunningham was what she called "the

FIGURE 117

Henri Matisse, *The Dance*, 1909–10.
Oil on canvas, 102½ × 154 in. (260 × 391 cm). The State Hermitage
Museum, St. Petersburg.



coordination of a pro and the non-definition of an amateur.”³⁴ These words could be used to describe Rainer’s style as well, suggesting that she has aimed throughout her life for a version of what she understands his modernist work to be about. *Spiraling Down* exaggerates Rainer’s key difference from Cunningham—her embrace of non-art ordinariness—but the strategy of appropriating elements from popular media also distinguishes the new movement from the imitation of tasks that anyone might do in everyday life in her 1960s work, aligning *Spiraling Down* more with postmodernist practices such as Sherrie Levine’s.

Levine’s strategy of presenting a copy of a photograph has been widely borrowed (by artists working in various media) and understood to level a critique against the modernist model’s seeming exclusion of historical and cultural specificity from its account of what matters. “When Levine wants an image of nature,” wrote Craig Owens in one important articulation of the postmodernist critique of modernism from 1980, “she does not produce one herself but appropriates another image, and this she does in order to expose the degree to which ‘nature’ is always already implicated in a system of cultural values which assigns it a specific, culturally determined position.”³⁵ Like Levine’s work, Rainer’s incorporation of photographs and videos of movements and gestures situated within the trends and tastes that mark the passage of time avoids ahistoricism’s potential for unrecognizability and privatized aesthetic experience. A dance for the twenty-first century, *Spiraling Down* proposes, is not primitivist like Nijinsky’s *Rite of Spring* or Matisse’s *Dance*, longing for a moment before civilization started documenting itself. Nor can it be as pristine and unflagging as the basic, impersonal human effort in Cunningham’s *Suite for five* (however much its bookends suggest a desire to stay connected to this ideal). Rather, the dance is in time, incorporating “culturally determined” references into the work of art.

Rainer differs from Levine, however, in that she does not adopt the images whole and largely unchanged—showing projections of *All of Me* or Sarah Bernhardt on screens, as she might have in *The Mind Is a Muscle*. Instead she appropriates them in Marx’s sense,

using multiple senses to carefully attend to and then performatively reproduce them, necessarily imprecisely, as new acculturated bodily habits added by history subtract or obscure some crucial element of the original. In this way *Spiraling Down* embraces the “de-formity” and “failure to repeat” that Judith Butler has argued “exposes the phantasmatic effect of abiding identity as a politically tenuous construction.”³⁶ Rainer’s work evokes the unintended and politically productive failures that form the cornerstone of Butler’s critique of identity when she presents a single gesture playing out across different bodies, making fascinatingly apparent how an unintended physical difference or habit of bodily movement changes what a gesture communicates.³⁷

So too, in focusing on depicted gesture and movement, Rainer’s relation to photographic media is much less like a postmodernist’s surface-to-surface brush with a stream of representations, and rather more an attempt to engage what Blake Stimson has called our collective “body photographic,” the corporal mass of inherited gesture that photography has made possible in the modern era.³⁸ Photographic imagery, in Rainer’s hands, becomes a means to focus on the interplay between historical specificity and overarching totality.

Rainer fends off the risk, mentioned above, that her appropriation will simply replicate the marketable, spectacular version of feeling that dominates late capitalist modernity by pursuing, alongside it, a modernist totalizing account of structure and feeling similar to that found in previous works such as *Trio A*. The bobbling and citational choreography serves as the basic structure and the different bodies as the material. The individual ways the dancers do the backward kick or the chest thrust are not unlike the thickly drawn outlines or slivers of unpainted white canvas visible in and around the ring of structuring figures in the Matisse painting. As a group Rainer’s dancers resemble a team of soccer players at practice, ambling across a field, but in their goallessness they are also like *The Dance*, figuring a kind of beautiful, purposeless, abstract intertwining, which their differences become a significant part of. “It’s a big metaphor,” Sally Silvers observed in an interview—or perhaps an analogy, an abstracted but substantively parallel imagining of a sociality. In this respect, it is not like the introspective individuals doing the same movements at different tempos in *Trio A*, but a dynamic assembly whose constantly changing position requires effort and focus and enough awareness of each other’s positions in space to avoid harming each other by stepping on a foot or jabbing an elbow into ribs.³⁹

Most fundamental, then, to the new totality that emerges in *Spiraling Down* are the transformations of the photographed and filmed gestures that happen in accord with the needs of the people onstage: from the beginning of the rehearsal process, when each dancer taught a part of what would become the collaged “mama phrase” to the others, on up through the performances when infinite small changes are required to adapt to the demands of staying within the orbit of the bobbling base.⁴⁰ It is the effort to produce and maintain the artwork’s strange, small model of sociality that unifies the disparate parts. Like the interweaving of the production of ideas with the material activity of human

beings in Marx's model of history or love, the abstract governing structure of the second half of *Spiraling Down* allows the artwork's many sensuous particulars to appear as they inflect a larger process and project. Rainer's critical awareness of the world around her has always been hewn in relation to the embodied lives undergoing and transforming the constraints of a particular historical moment. It is in her formal assertion of the inseparability of bodies from prescriptive tasks, codes, and rules that we become conscious of another's desire to make sense of the concrete struggles around her. Grabbing on to the lucid and elastic structure of her abstraction, we feel our own desire for consciousness quicken (fig. 118).



FIGURE 118

Yvonne Rainer, *Spiraling Down*, 2008. New Theater, World Performance Project (WPP), Yale University, November 2008. Still from video by WPP.

NOTES

Abbreviated titles are used in the notes for most citations. Full publication data appear in the bibliography.

Introduction

1. Judd, "Specific Objects," 3, 2.
2. See discussion of Greenberg and Marcuse below.
3. See Greenberg, "Exhibition of Willem de Kooning," 229.
4. Porter, "Art."
5. Artists had brought ordinary materials into their paintings and sculptures before in the twentieth century, and had even coupled these practices with performance experiments, but they had not performed ordinary physicality in ways that so closely resembled the mundane. Think, for example, of the boxy costumes Picasso contributed to the collaborative production *Parade* in 1916–17, several years after he made his first Cubist collage; as the ballet was meant to scandalize through its imitation of popular music hall entertainment, it drew upon the language of the everyday, but it was a version of the ordinary that remained securely and recognizably within theatrical categories. Similarly, Kurt Schwitters intertwined his practice of assembling Merz collages from daily life's leftover fragments with live performances in theaters and clubs of his *Ursonate* (1922–32), a recitation that made poetry out of the broken-apart phonemes of ordinary language. The result was striking for the grandiosity within which it framed its absurd meaninglessness, however, rather than any blasé submission.
6. Marx, "Theses on Feuerbach," 155; Clark, "Clement Greenberg's Theory of Art," 153 (emphasis in the original). All Clark quotations in this paragraph from this source and page.
7. See Clark, "The Unhappy Consciousness," in *Farewell to an Idea*, 299–369; Clark, "Phenomenality and Materiality in Cézanne," 108.
8. Kaprow, "Legacy of Jackson Pollock," 7.
9. Cage, "Satie" (1958), in *Silence*, 82. "Letting sounds be themselves" is a ubiquitous Cage quotation. It appears, among other places in Cage, "Experimental Music" (1957), in *Silence*, 10.
10. See, for example, the discussion of "expressiveness" in John Cage, interview by Roger Reynolds, Ann Arbor, December 1961, in *John Cage*, 48–49.
11. Rainer, "Yvonne Rainer, Dancer and Filmmaker."
12. See Higgins, "Information and Experience," 17–68.
13. Ames, "Is It Art?" 41. Ames quotes Alan Solomon, "New Art," 71–72. Solomon gave Rauschenberg his first major retrospective at the Jewish Museum and was commissioner for the Pop-dominated Venice Biennale in 1964.
14. Greenberg, "Recentness of Sculpture," in *American Sculpture of the Sixties* (1967), reprinted in Battcock, *Minimal Art*, 182 (page citations are to the 1995 edition.) For examples of skepticism about Kaprow's happenings, see A.I.M., "Reviews and Previews: Allan Kaprow," *Artnews* 58 (November 1959): 14 (reviewing 18 *Happenings in Six Parts*.) See also Porter, "Art."
15. Greenberg, "Recentness of Sculpture," 182. The remaining quotations in this paragraph come from this essay, 184.
16. Herbert Marcuse, "Art as a Form of Reality," 132. All remaining quotes in this chapter by Marcuse are from this source and page (emphasis in the original).
17. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, 5.
18. By contrast, in Trisha Brown's performance

- works from the early 1970s such as *Roof Piece* (1971), the ordinary and the abstract fit together with apparent ease, suggesting that the Judson aesthetic had become a sort of cultural style below Fourteenth Street in New York.
19. Guilbaut, *How New York Stole the Idea of Modern Art*, 204–5. See Kee, “Situating a Singular Kind of ‘Action,’” 125; Kazu Kaido, “Reconstruction: The Role of the Avant-Garde in Post-War Japan,” and Ichiro Hario, “Progressive Trends in Modern Japanese Art,” both in Elliot and Kaido, *Reconstructions*, 21, 25; Chong, *Tokyo, 1955–1970*, 50.
 20. See Graham, *Blood Memory*, 120. On New York as the center of modern dance, see Franko, “Emotivist Movement and Histories of Modernism: The Case of Martha Graham,” in *Dancing Modernism*, 39; and McDonagh, *Rise and Fall*, 24–36. The Merce Cunningham Studio opened its classes to non-company members in late 1959, joining the Graham School as a center for modern dance training in New York. See Vaughn and Harris, *Merce Cunningham*, 118.
 21. On Graham’s formalism, see Franko, “Emotivist Movement,” 40–41. On Graham’s abstraction and her relation to eighteenth-century ballet, see Foster, *Reading Dancing*, 150, 153–54. On Graham’s innovations in relation to the “romantic” style of the Denishawn company, see McDonagh, *Rise and Fall*, 24–29. On Graham during the Cold War, see Geduld, “Dancing Diplomacy,” 44–81.
 22. Graham, “I Am a Dancer,” in Carter, *Routledge Dance Studies Reader*, 66.
 23. For a rich account of the downtown New York art scene in the early 1960s, see Banes, *Greenwich Village*.
 24. See Schneemann, note beginning “Form is Emotion,” 1960–62, in *More Than Meat Joy*, 13.
 25. For two recent discussions of Acconci in the context of conceptual art, see Kotz, *Words to Be Looked At*, 154–74; and Meltzer, *Systems We Have Loved*, 5, 39–41.
 26. Rainer, “Quasi Survey,” 65.
 27. Schneemann, “From the Notebooks (1962–63),” in *More Than Meat Joy*, 9.
 28. Acconci, interview by Béar, 75 (emphasis in the original).
 29. This book’s use of the term *code* is derived from the early-twentieth-century semiotics of Ferdinand de Saussure and Roman Jakobson. See Jakobson, “Shifters,” 130–33.
 30. Lefebvre, *Critique of Everyday Life*, 2:189–90. Page numbers in parentheses in this paragraph and the next three refer to this source.
 31. See Butler, *Bodies That Matter*, 27–56; quote on 28. Page numbers in parentheses in this and the following paragraph refer to this source.
 32. Butler, “Vulnerability and Resistance Revisited.” See also the proposals Butler makes for an embodied political sphere in Butler, “Can One Lead a Good Life in a Bad Life?”
 33. See Edwards, “Greensboro Lunch Counter.”
 34. Baker, “Bigger Than a Hamburger.”
 35. On the protests and marches of the civil rights movement and their widespread media coverage, see D’Angelo, *American Civil Rights Movement*, 279–89. I am not suggesting that the strategies of the protestors directly influenced those of the performance artists in New York; only that their confluence suggests a shared sympathy for what ordinary gestures could communicate emotionally and politically.
 36. Lefebvre, *Critique of Everyday Life*, 1:31.
 37. Baker, “Bigger Than a Hamburger.”
 38. Clark, *Sight of Death*, 174.
 39. The important thesis that “live art” was intended to do away with the high art object and its associations with commodification by presenting aspects of everyday life directly rather than in mediated form was asserted by Roselee Goldberg in what has been called “the first serious study of performance art,” but it was already present in Lucy Lippard’s survey of conceptual art from 1973. Sally Banes has used her extensive research on experimental dance and performance to support a similar argument, and Peggy Phelan has offered significant elaborations in the field of performance studies. See Goldberg, *Performance*, 6–7; Kontova, “Unconscious History,” 30–36; Lippard, *Six Years*, ix, xi; Banes, *Democracy’s Body* and *Greenwich Village, 1963*; Phelan, “Ontology of Performance,” 148; Phelan, *Live Art in LA*, 11–15.
 40. See Lambert-Beatty, *Being Watched*, 131; Delany, *Motion of Light in Water*, 116, quoted and discussed in Rodenbeck, *Radical Prototypes*, 160; Potts, “Writing the Happening,” 22–23; Potts, *Experiments in Modern Realism*, 338–62; and Shannon, *Disappearance of Objects*, 48. Like Shannon’s discussion of Oldenburg’s performance art, the present book describes artists in New York in the 1960s who insist on intransigent, nonverbalizable physical facts in the face of

- abstraction, routinization, and the flattening of signification in everyday life in the postmodern city (Shannon, 48). In my examples, however, the fight does not stop with blockage, but rather pushes through to propose a model of shared form or practice in which materiality plays as determining a role as abstract structures.
41. Judith Rodenbeck, "Foil," in Buchloh and Rodenbeck, *Experiments in the Everyday*, 47–67; Rodenbeck, "Madness and Method," 54–79; Rodenbeck, *Radical Prototypes*; and Potts, *Experiments in Modern Realism*, 338–62. For a related argument about Robert Watts, see Benjamin Buchloh, "Robert Watts: Animate Objects—Inanimate Subjects," in Buchloh and Rodenbeck, *Experiments in the Everyday*, 10.
 42. Potts, "Writing the Happening," 27, 29.
 43. Kirby, *Happenings*, 114.
 44. Sontag, "Happenings," 273; Rodenbeck, "Crash," 104, 105, 110. For notes about performers riding a bicycle and rattling mops and other household objects at the windows, see Allan Kaprow, "The Courtyard / The Script" and "The Courtyard / The Production," in Kirby, *Happenings*, 105–9.
 45. See for example, the script for *Paper* (1964), which includes the character "Twist gal." See Kaprow, "Paper," 13. Kaprow's description of the work *Bon Marché* (1963), included in a letter from 1963, describes the characters "nice gal" ("chick" is crossed out in the letter), "Girl (health-food kind)," and "Girl standing in blue kiddie-pool looking like bride." Alex Potts presented copies of this letter during the course of his Stoddard lectures at UC Berkeley in 2004, drawn from his research in the Kaprow Papers at the Getty Research Institute. An image of the bride figure is documented in figure 71 in Kaprow, *Assemblage, Environments, and Happenings*, 94. The happening called *Orange* (1964) featured a woman wearing a bikini in a bathtub; see figure 69 in *Assemblage, Environments, Happenings*, n.p.
 46. Potts, *Experiments in Modern Realism*, 29, 35, 355.
 47. Rodenbeck, "Madness and Method," 60.
 48. Potts, "Writing the Happening," 27, 29.
 49. Lambert-Beatty, *Being Watched*, 131.
 50. See Lefebvre and Ross, "Lefebvre on the Situationists," 74; and Sadler, *Situationist City*, 20, 170n18.
 51. Debord, "Perspectives for Conscious Changes."
 52. Michael Trebitsch, preface to Lefebvre, *Critique of Everyday Life*, 2:xxiii; and Sadler, *Situationist City*, 45. See also Lefebvre and Ross, "Lefebvre on the Situationists," 69.
 53. Debord, *Society of the Spectacle*, 22.
 54. On "media," see Debord, *Comments on the Society of the Spectacle*, 6.
 55. Debord, *Society of the Spectacle*, 33, 24, 24.
 56. Jonathan Crary relied on Debord in 1989 to argue against contemporary art "complicit with [spectacle's] annihilation of the past and fetishization of the new," and to favor Surrealist-inspired "outmoded" objects and Situationist urban dérives because they insist on the history that the spectacle would have everyone forget. Crary, "Attention, Spectacle, Counter-Memory," 106–7. Similarly, Branden Joseph used Debord in 2003 to address the generalized elimination of meaningful difference in spectacular capitalism's relentless repetition and quantification, finding an answer in the very small differences between very similar images and materials borrowed from the commodity's world in, for example, Rauschenberg's *Factum I* and *Factum II* (1957). Joseph, *Random Order*, 204–5.
 57. See Banes, *Democracy's Body*, xv–xvi; and Banes, *Greenwich Village*, 11–15.
 58. Lambert-Beatty, *Being Watched*, 72, 125. Page numbers in parentheses in this and the following paragraph refer to this source.
 59. Via earlier readings by Rosalind Krauss and Hal Foster, James Meyer makes a similar point about minimalist sculpture in the 1960s: it does not simply internalize capitalist and media culture's life-denying forms—thereby "allud[ing] to the reality it negates"—but also demonstrates a "pragmatic acceptance" of the compromised position in which any artist must now sit with her art in relation to the conditions of the broader culture. He locates such acceptance in the practice of Judd, "even as his work sought to distance itself, through blankness and skepticism, from these very conditions." See Meyer, *Minimalism*, 187–88; Krauss, "Cultural Logic," 8–14; Foster, "Crux of Minimalism," 35–70.
 60. Sedgwick, "Paranoid Reading," 15. The trend in recent criticism toward emphasizing symptom is in a lineage with the "paranoid" critical position Sedgwick analyzes. Like the paranoid reading of the 1990s, influenced strongly by Michel Foucault, the witness to symptoms grounds analysis in a strong "faith in exposure . . . as though to make something visible as a problem were, if not a hop, skip, and jump away from

- getting it solved, at least self-evidently a step in that direction" (17); and is similarly invested in deploying "knowledge" (9) to ward off the humiliation of being caught off guard, or waxing nostalgic for something that turns out never to have existed, or moving with hope toward pleasure when something bad will finally destroy it, as paranoia "requires that bad news always already be known" (10); and it finally also delays reparation, rather than, as Sedgwick understands the pattern via Melanie Klein, occupying the depressive position that "inaugurates ethical possibility—in the form of a guilty, empathetic view of the other as at once good, damaged, integral, and requiring and eliciting love and care" (15). Thanks to David Getsy for drawing my attention to the parallel this text offers.
61. See, for example, *Internationale Situationniste* articles reprinted in Knabb, *Situationist International Anthology*: "Preliminary Problems in Constructing a Situation" (1958), 49; Átila Kotányi and Raoul Vaneigem, "Basic Program of the Bureau of Unitary Urbanism" (1961), 86–89; "The Bad Days Will End" (1962), 111; Raoul Vaneigem, "Basic Banalities (Part 2)" (1963), 158; "Decline and Fall of the Spectacle-Commodity Economy" (1966), 200; and "How Not To Read Situationist Books" (1969), 340. See also Sadler, *Situationist City*, esp. 43, 46; and Michael E. Gardiner, "Resisting the Spectacle," in *Critiques of Everyday Life*, 118–24.
 62. Clark, *Painting of Modern Life*, 9–10. Clark's book placed the Situationist notion of spectacle into the longer history of modernism's response to modernity. A recent *October* conversation expressed doubts about the "semblance of totality" inherent to the theory of spectacle, which makes it seem a "paranoid formulation" that "reduces its possible effectivity." See Boal et al., "Exchange on Afflicted Powers," 5.
 63. Marx, "Theses on Feuerbach," 155.
 64. See Kristine Stiles's early account of performance art as "a warning system, an aesthetic response to human emergency that occurs in the lapse between theory and practice," in "Survival Ethos and Destruction Art," 74–102. Thanks to Hannah Higgins for drawing this text to my attention.
 65. Other artists in New York did rely on primitivist notions of black embodiment in their art. See Banes, "The Body Is Power," in *Greenwich Village, 1963*, 204–12.
 66. This book is in dialogue with Rebecca Schneider's linking of performance art with the history and theory of modernist art in *The Explicit Body in Performance*. Schneider's notion of "the explicit body" in feminist performance art since the 1960s draws on the concept of "literality" and "the troublesome sensuousness of the concrete particular" in ways similar to this book's "concrete body" (117). She also locates roots for her examples (which include Schneemann) in modernism, which interests her most for its intention and capacity to push into visibility what cannot be contained by cultural categories defined by rigid binaries. Constructed symbolic oppositions between mind/matter, civilized/primitive, European/other, feminine/masculine, break down when they are performed and made literal by an explicit body, and this "threatens comprehensibility" in general, often laying bare how "unbearable" the most oppressive aspects of the symbolic order really are (117). Schneider's book is consistent with the poststructuralism of much important critical cultural analysis of the 1990s insofar as the main site of social practice that it calls to our attention and affirms is at the level of representation. Like Butler in *Gender Trouble*, Schneider shows us that subjects have the capacity to alter the inherited symbolic order in the ways they choose to perform its codes, indeed that their bodies are often actively pushing back or refusing these codes whether they intend to or not by failing to perform them correctly (or showing that such a performance is impossible.) The present study hopes to build upon such poststructuralist insights by allowing the concreteness of works of art to remind us of other dimensions of social practice than signifying, and thereby perhaps to begin to think about those further steps in a critical process where the physical bodies and the abstract cultural codes begin to negotiate and mutually shape each other in productive ways.
 67. Jones, "Presence in Absentia," 14.
 68. Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, 81.
 69. Kaja Silverman, "Photography by Other Means," in *Flesh of My Flesh*, 168–221, esp. 174–75; Kelsey, *Photography and the Art of Chance*, 3.
 70. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, 5.
 71. Yvonne Rainer, "Statement," program for *The Mind Is a Muscle* (1968), reproduced in *Work*, 71.
 72. Lambert-Beatty, *Being Watched*, 151.
 73. Rebecca Schneider, correspondence with the

- author via Yale University Press, October 2013.
74. Buck-Morss and Kester, "Aesthetics after the End of Art," 40.

Chapter 1. Hurray for People

1. A new western television program was released in the United States almost every year from 1950 to 1958. *Gunslinger* (1961) and *The Road West* (1966–67) were two of many. Accessed 12 October 2012, http://www.imdb.com/search/title?at=o&genres=western&sort=release_date_us&start=101&title_type=tv_series. On the televised execution of a Vietcong officer by South Vietnamese police chief Brigadier General Nguyen Ngoc Loan on 1 February 1968 that Rainer refers to in her statement, see Lambert-Beatty, *Being Watched*, 146–48. Lambert-Beatty's book-length study of Rainer's works in relation to spectacle culture is discussed in the introduction.
2. Rainer, "Statement," program for *The Mind Is a Muscle* (1968), in *Work*, 71.
3. Rainer, "Quasi Survey," 63.
4. This and the following two sentences: Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, 112.
5. This and the following quotation: *ibid.*, 2 (emphasis in the original), 13.
6. Lambert-Beatty, *Being Watched*, 130.
7. Rainer, "Quasi Survey," 67. Page numbers for quotations from this essay in the remainder of this chapter listed in parentheses.
8. *Trio A* has been performed as a solo and in groups in various Rainer pieces from 1966 to the present. For a descriptive listing of a segment of them, see Banes, *Terpsichore in Sneakers*, 52–53. For an account of more recent iterations, see *Dance Research Journal* 41, no. 2 (Winter 2009): entire issue. Rainer taught the first few steps of *Trio A* at a speaking engagement at the Townsend Center at the University of California, Berkeley, in April 2004. She also taught it to a group at UC Irvine in 2008, including art historian Julia Bryan-Wilson. See Bryan-Wilson, "Practicing 'Trio' A," 54–74. David Gordon has also put the dance into his work. See Brockway, *Beyond the Mainstream*. In 2001 Rainer taught *Trio A* to the highly trained dancers in Mikhail Baryshnikov's White Oak Dance Project for a collaborative choreography project with Baryshnikov as part of a program called *PASTForward*. Only a few people have been authorized by Rainer to teach *Trio A*; Pat Catterson is one. Pat Catterson, interview by author, 28 March 2011.
9. Banes helpfully describes a "weight effort" in *Trio A* that is "neither buoyant and light, nor extremely strong or heavy." See Banes, *Terpsichore in Sneakers*, 47.
10. On Abstract Expressionism's primitivism, see Leja, *Reframing Abstract Expressionism*.
11. For Clement Greenberg's emphasis on modernism's deep-rooted positivism, see Greenberg, "Present Prospects," 20–30; and Greenberg, "Cézanne and the Unity of Modern Art," 82–91.
12. Rainer, *Feelings Are Facts*, 159.
13. Though the painting was officially untitled, Rainer refers to "Bridge" as "my private title" in *ibid.*, 158.
14. Al Held, statement in "Panel," compiled by Irving Sandler, *It Is* (Autumn 1958): 78, reprinted in Sandler, *Al Held*, 26, 28n4.
15. Rainer confirmed that a different untitled painting from 1950–52 (unavailable because in a private collection, but closely related to the painting illustrated in fig. 20) was or was very similar to the one she called "Bridge." E-mail message to author, 4 February 2012.
16. This and the following quotation: Rainer, *Feelings Are Facts*, 159.
17. See Rosenberg, "American Action Painters," 22ff.
18. Kaprow, "Legacy of Jackson Pollock," 2–4. On what Kaprow and certain artists of his generation held on to from the modernist tradition, differently defined, see Potts, "Autonomy in Post-War Art," 43–59.
19. Rainer, *Feelings Are Facts*, 157.
20. Greenberg, "Present Prospects," 24.
21. See Clark, "Unhappy Consciousness," 316–321, quotation on 318.
22. This and the following quotation: Greenberg, "Present Prospects," 25–26.
23. Greenberg, "Jackson Pollock Market Soars," 107–14, quotation on 108.
24. See Greenberg, "Exhibition of Willem de Kooning," 229.
25. Greenberg, "Present Prospects," 167–68. Greenberg repeatedly explained this feeling dialectic in his criticism. In Paul Cézanne's painting, for example, composition and spatial illusion are "imposed on the 'raw' chromatic material supplied by the Impressionist notation of visual experience." De Kooning's best paintings take measures to "suppress his facility," his reckless capacity to align, blend, and bend color

- into form. See Greenberg, "Cézanne and the Unity of Modern Art," 88, and "Exhibition of Willem de Kooning," 229.
26. Greenberg, "Jackson Pollock Market Soars," 110. Later Greenberg described the feeling conveyed in the form and structure of Pollock's early paintings this way: Pollock's early work "startled people less by the novelty of its means than by the force and originality of the feeling behind it . . . a language of baroque shapes and calligraphy that twisted this space to its own measure and vehemence . . . the capacity to bind the canvas rectangle and assert its ambiguous flatness and quite unambiguous shape as a single and whole image concentrating into one the several images distributed over it." Greenberg, "American-Type Painting," 3:225.
 27. See Guilbaut, *How New York Stole the Idea of Modern Art*, 204–5; Geduld, "Dancing Diplomacy," 44–81.
 28. See Rainer, "Performer as a Persona," 50; Banes, *Terpsichore in Sneakers*, 42.
 29. Rainer, *Feelings Are Facts*, 185; Martin, "Dance: Graham," x12.
 30. Mark Franko offers a carefully charted, corrective history of the development of the understanding, prevalent by the mid-1960s and largely of her own fashioning, of Graham as expressionist. Early leftist viewers, in fact, criticized her work for its modernist impersonality—an "emotional primitivism"—in the face of real-world misery. Franko, *Dancing Modernism*, 38–74, quotation on 61.
 31. *Ibid.*, 52.
 32. Adam Curtis helpfully links the development of the deep roots of consumer culture in the United States to the spread of Freudian theory. See Curtis, *Century of the Self*.
 33. She also took ballet classes with James Waring at this time. See Sachs, *Yvonne Rainer*, 135.
 34. Rainer, *Feelings Are Facts*, 170, 175, 183.
 35. See Franko, *Dancing Modernism*, 42–47.
 36. Graham, interview by Pierre Tugal, 22.
 37. See *Graham Technique Class*, motion picture filmed by Helen Priest Rogers, August 12 and 13, 1957, WMI Gymnasium at Connecticut College School of Dance, in the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, Jerome Robbins Dance Division.
 38. This information is drawn from my own years studying the Graham technique in the UC Berkeley dance department, particularly the two semesters of classic Graham in 1996–97 taught by Marnie Wood, who studied with Graham and danced in her company from 1958–68. See Wood, "Marnie Wood," 105–8. Rainer verified the similarity of her own experience in e-mail to author, 29 August 2006. On the myth of the tragic noir hero and heroine of American art in the 1940s, see Leja, "Narcissus in Chaos: Subjectivity, Ideology, Modern Man & Woman," in *Reframing Abstract Expressionism*, 203–74.
 39. Martin, "Dance: Graham," x12. Rainer saw the 1958 performance of *Clytemnestra*.
 40. See Rainer, *Feelings Are Facts*, 170; Sachs, "Chronology," in *Yvonne Rainer*, 134.
 41. Description here based on "Cave of the Heart," danced by Takako Asakawa, directed by Martha Graham, recorded in Graham, *Martha Graham Dance Company*.
 42. Rainer, *Feelings Are Facts*, 170.
 43. *Ibid.*, 188.
 44. Foster, *Reading Dancing*, 32.
 45. Rainer, "This Is the Story of a Man Who. . ." (1973), in *Work*, 327.
 46. Rainer, "Fond Memoir," 52; Rainer, *Feelings Are Facts*, 170.
 47. Foster, *Reading Dancing*, 34. See also Banes, *Terpsichore in Sneakers*, 5–7. McDonagh (*Rise and Fall*, 36, 52–71) interprets the nonreferential quality in more conservative terms: Cunningham's "generation simply wished to be rather than to be for something."
 48. Martin, frequently a fan of Graham's work, felt that the 1958 performance of *Cave of the Heart* "never actually caught fire. . . . Miss Graham has concentrated on Medea as the sorceress and her necromantic devices for satisfying her consuming jealousy. The result may be nearer to ghoulishness than to tragedy." See Martin, "Graham Dances 'Cave of the Heart,'" 91.
 49. As Franko demonstrates, Cunningham's "expression without intention," coupled with "unexpressed intention," must be seen in contrast to Cunningham's perception of the Graham technique's "expressivist values," in which movements were linked with definite and intended meanings, located beyond the dance. Franko, "Expressivism and Chance Procedure," in *Dancing Modernism*, 72, 81, 84.
 50. Yvonne Rainer, e-mail to author, 7 June 2008.
 51. Morris, "Dance," 8.
 52. In the videotape of the restaging of *Three Satie Spoons* from 2004 at the Getty Center in

- Los Angeles, the dancer Sally Silvers did not choose to emphasize stability, and thus the dance became a piece about wobbling. See tapes of rehearsal and performance, 8–9 May 2004, Harold M. Williams Auditorium, J. Paul Getty Center, Los Angeles, Getty Research Institute. Thanks go to Glenn Phillips and Tricia Ingraham at the Getty Research Institute for making these unedited tapes available to me.
53. J. P., “Rainer at the Commonwealth Institute,” 46.
 54. Rainer, *Feelings Are Facts*, 210.
 55. For a comparison between Graham and Judson dance, see Banes, *Democracy’s Body*, 55.
 56. Foster, *Reading Dancing*, 34.
 57. Cage, *John Cage*.
 58. This and the following quotation: see entry for “Fontana Mix (1958),” *John Cage*, 39–40.
 59. McDonagh, “Robert Dunn: Educating for the Future,” in *Rise and Fall*, 50; also quoted in Banes, *Democracy’s Body*, 5. “Mickey-mousing” is a term dancers use to refer to choreography that perfectly matches its accompanying music; every movement falls on a particular note.
 60. This and the following quotation: Rainer, *Work*, 284.
 61. Frampton continues, “What was important was not that she made the specific noises that she did, but that that single gesture broke open the whole decorum of dance.” See MacDonald, “Interview with Hollis Frampton,” 107.
 62. Graham, interview by Pierre Tugal, 22.
 63. Marks, “Dance Works by Rainer and Herko,” 54.
 64. Moore, “Yvonne Rainer, Fred Herko.” In e-mail of 7 June 2008, Rainer offered this correction to Moore’s description: “Lillian Moore was wrong. I stood upstage left on half toe with arms by my sides and ‘twiddled’ my fingers while saying ‘I told you everything would be alright [pause], Harry.’ This happened several times during the dance. I didn’t ‘prance around’ while saying it.”
 65. Rainer mentions the column in “Two Dances by Deborah Hay,” 2–3, and *Feelings Are Facts*, 235. The column would have a second life, painted gray for Robert Morris’s performance *Column*, later in 1961. See discussion of *Column* below.
 66. Moore, “Yvonne Rainer, Fred Herko”; information on music title in Rainer, *Work*, 286.
 67. J. P., “Rainer at the Commonwealth Institute,” 46.
 68. Moore, “Yvonne Rainer, Fred Herko,” n.p.; Marks, “Dance Works,” 57.
 69. Tapes of rehearsal and performance, 8–9 May 2004, Getty Center.
 70. Moore, “Yvonne Rainer, Fred Herko,” n.p.
 71. Marks, “Dance Works,” 57.
 72. Rainer, *Feelings Are Facts*, 195–96.
 73. Forti, *Handbook in Motion*, 39.
 74. Rainer, *Work*, 285.
 75. Moore, “Yvonne Rainer, Fred Herko,” n.p.; Marks, “Dance Works,” 54.
 76. Walter Terry, “Contemporary Dancers.”
 77. Graham, *Martha Graham Dance Company*.
 78. Steve Paxton, interview by Martha Myers and Dr. Gerald Myers, 25 June 1994, in Paxton, *Speaking of Dance*.
 79. Rainer, *Work*, 3.
 80. “Interview with Bruce Nauman” (1988), by Joan Simon, in Morgan, *Bruce Nauman*, 293.
 81. Rainer, *Work*, 328–29.
 82. For the detailed account of the workshop’s beginnings and proceedings, see Banes, “Robert Dunn’s Workshop,” in *Democracy’s Body*, 1–33, esp. 7, 15. Information about meeting at Rainer’s studio in Schneemann, *More Than Meat Joy*, 32.
 83. Dunn taught one more composition class in 1964. See McDonagh, “Robert Dunn,” 48.
 84. Rainer mentions the subway as a source in her notebooks. Banes, *Democracy’s Body*, 67.
 85. Sally Gross’s dress may reflect the fact that she was a working mother of two in 1963, fitting rehearsals for dance performances into her schedule when she could. Sally Gross, interview by author, Spring 2004.
 86. All quotations in this paragraph: Halprin, “Rainer Interviews Ann Halprin,” 143, 147.
 87. Forti, *Handbook in Motion*, 29, 32.
 88. Richard Schechner concisely addresses Halprin’s primitivist, universalized understanding of the body in relation to her equally strong ideas about dance as particular and concrete “physical enactment” involving an ordinary body as a constructed “social being.” See Richard Schechner, foreword to Ross, *Anna Halprin*, x–xi.
 89. Halprin is the first to agree that all of her own performance works, including those that present task movement such as *Five-Legged Stool* (1961–62) and *Parades and Changes*, maintain her strong theatrical sensibility. Halprin, telephone conversation with the author, 1 April 2008.
 90. Performers’ names listed in Rainer, *Feelings Are Facts*, 223. A later version presented Lucinda Childs, Trisha Brown, and Robert Rauschenberg. See Morris, “Dance,” 8.
 91. See Banes, *Democracy’s Body*, 58–60; Morris, “Dance,” 8, 24; and Rainer, e-mail, 7 June 2008.

92. See Banes, "Steve Paxton," 12, 13.
93. Banes lists "tossing coins" as one of Cunningham's methods in *Terpsichore in Sneakers*, 7.
94. Johnston, "Modern Dance," 184. See also Copeland, "Cunningham, Collage, and the Computer," 45.
95. Cage and Cunningham with Stan VanDerBeek, Nam June Paik, David Tudor, and Gordon Mumma, *Variations V* (1965), film of complete performance in Hamburg, Germany, directed by John Cage, Ubuweb, accessed 1 October 2013, http://www.ubu.com/film/cage_variations5.html.
96. This quotation and the next: Paxton, "Trance Script," 18–19.
97. Ibid., 18–19. "Setting one's set" is a dance term for determining the upright carriage of the body.
98. Rainer: "I had been criticized by Steve in particular for exploiting my own charisma." See "Interview with Lyn Blumenthal (June 1984)," *Profile* 4, no. 6 (Fall 1984), reprinted in Rainer, *A Woman Who*, 62. See also comment based on an interview with Paxton in Banes, *Democracy's Body*, 233n20.
99. Rainer refers to the work as "severe and rigorous" in *Feelings Are Facts*, 241. Gretchen MacLane remembers being "bored out of my mind. But it wasn't bad being bored in those days." Banes, *Democracy's Body*, 51. Paxton in "Trance Script" describes his own work as "tedious" for audiences and describes certain viewers as "provoked and bored. They were angry and bored" (17–18).
100. Hay, interview by Banes.
101. McDonagh, "Robert Dunn," 53–54.
102. McDonagh, "Steve Paxton: People," in *Rise and Fall*, 79.
103. Johnston, "Judson Concerts #3, #4," 9.
104. Waring et al., "Judson: A Discussion," 41.
105. Rainer seems to defend the work against an unnamed detractor when she writes, "The idea was not to look like robotic automatons, but rather to call into question received notions of expressivity. . . . I don't think many people got it." Rainer, *Feelings Are Facts*, 242.
106. Paxton, "Trance Script," 19.
107. "Interview by Lyn Blumenthal," in Rainer, *A Woman Who*, 59–60.
108. Johnston, "Judson Concerts #3, #4," 9.
109. She writes: "Though I disagree with some of his ideas about freedom which smack of transcendental flight, I can only admire the way in which he lives his life." See Rainer, "Backwater Twosome," 8.
110. Rainer, *Feelings Are Facts*, 170.
111. Foster, *Reading Dancing*, 181.
112. On Rauschenberg's capacity for dance, see Waring et al., "Judson: A Discussion," 40.
113. Johnston, "Judson Concerts #3, #4," 9; Rainer, *Feelings Are Facts*, 143.
114. Johnston, "New American Modern Dance," 130.
115. This and the next three quotations: Johnston, "Yvonne Rainer II," 18.
116. Music title in Rainer, *Feelings Are Facts*, 188.
117. Johnston, "Modern Dance," 188.
118. Rainer, "Quasi Survey"; Robert Morris, "Notes on Sculpture," 222–35. The variety of responses to and ideas about minimalism on display in Battcock's anthology promptly fell away after minimalism's inception.
119. Rainer, *Feelings Are Facts*, 265. On Samuel J. Wagstaff Jr.'s 1964 exhibition that "helped to launch" the minimal aesthetic's rise to prominence in the United States in the 1960s and '70s, see Meyer, *Minimalism*, 77.
120. Krauss, *Passages in Modern Sculpture*, 236.
121. Morris, "Notes on Sculpture," 234 (emphasis in the original).
122. This and the following quotation: Morris, "Notes on Sculpture," 226, 232.
123. Lippard, "New York Letter," 46; and Judd, "In the Galleries," *Arts Magazine*, February 1965, in Judd, *Complete Writings*, 165. On the critical reception of "the plywood show," see Meyer, *Minimalism*, 113–16.
124. See Spivey, "Minimal Presence of Simone Forti," 11–18; and Morris, "Notes on Dance," *Drama Review* 10, no. 2 (1965): 180–86. Morris's *Column* also had a former life in Rainer's work *The Bells*; see discussion above.
125. Though Morris did not claim the metaphor of the figure for his sculptures directly, he used a segment of an interview with Tony Smith explaining the man-size dimensions of his six-foot-cube *Die* (1962) as the epigraph to part 2 of his essay; he compared an unidentified "six-foot cube" to a "Baroque figurative bronze" in another section of the text; and note the anthropomorphic language in the quotation above about "the object" becoming "less self-important." Morris, "Notes on Sculpture," 229–30, 234 (emphasis in the original).
126. Fried, "Art and Objecthood," 128.
127. Rainer, "Don't Give the Game Away," 47.
128. Speaking of her work with hindsight in 1972 ("Performer as a Persona," 52), Rainer located

“narcissism, virtuosity and display” in herself as much as in ballet and modern dance: “[I was] coming to terms with my own exhibitionist nature. I mean, people go into performing and dancing for this very reason. It has to do with the immediate confrontation with the adoring gaze of the spectator and living in that moment.”

129. On “expression” as one of dance’s primary illusions, see Jowitt, “Expression and Expressionism,” 169.
130. Clark, “Pollock’s Smallness,” 22.
131. Clark, *Farewell to an Idea*, 401.
132. Clark, “Pollock’s Smallness,” 22; Debord, *Society of the Spectacle*, 34.
133. Meltzer, *Systems We Have Loved*, 71–116; Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, 112.
134. See discussion of Debord’s wheel metaphor in this volume, p. 22.
135. This and the following quotation, Lefebvre, *Critique of Everyday Life*, 2:64, 65.

Chapter 2. Concretions

1. This and the following quotation: Drake, “Second Sexual Revolution,” 59, 54.
2. Lefebvre, *Critique of Everyday Life*, 2:190. Lefebvre does not write extensively about sex in *The Critique of Everyday Life*, but when he does, he provides a helpfully dialectical structure through which to think about it. One example, excerpted above, of such writing: “As much as any other, and more, sexual need becomes modified and these modifications enable us to understand the [modification of] other [needs]. It can be argued that it loses the characteristics of instinct and need, such is its attachment to symbols, images, rituals, and ceremonies, i.e., forms which are external to nature. And yet it never manages to separate itself from sex, per se, even in the wildest Platonic Utopias, even though it disrupts sex drastically (and not without damaging it), and metamorphoses it. The sexual act becomes a social act, in which an entire society recognizes itself, with all of the orders and interdictions, the pressures and demands, the open possibilities and the closed ones. At the same time, the sexual act cannot be seen as one simple, coherent action; it is a microcosm with thousands of changing aspects. It crosses over disconnected areas: body and soul, spontaneity and culture, seriousness and games, covenants and challenges. The act of love . . . summarizes a society, and even in its clandestine and hidden

aspects; but this is because it is consummated (lawfully or not) in secret, outside of that society. In a novel dialectical movement, it is an *extrasocial social act*. It is consummated in society and, if needs be, despite it and against it; and this is how and why it reflects society like a mirror. Hence its importance in the world of (aesthetic and ethical) expressivity. It is the most cultured of needs, the most refined of desires, with its social content which it supersedes in its search for the absolute, and yet it still plunges into the depths of nature, and into the profundities of dialectical contradiction” (190–91). Because Lefebvre’s “outside,” in the notion of “the extrasocial social act,” is dialectical, it is fundamentally different from Michel Foucault’s space outside of discourse, discussed below. Everything that happens in Lefebvre’s everyday is part of a social sphere.

3. Tuli Kupferberg, of the Fugs, for example, was a committed Reichian, and was one of the leaders of the League for Sexual Freedom in New York, beginning in 1964. The league counted many from New York’s avant-garde among its members, and held discussions and demonstrations with the aim of “challenging American sexual laws and values.” See Allyn, *Make Love, Not War*, 44–45. According to Mary McGuire (“Building a Social Frame”), Reichians frequently took over the “Hall of Issues” discussions at the Judson Memorial Church in the early 1960s. Paul Robinson (*Freudian Left*, 40) credits Reich for his “imperfect,” yet insightful “attempt to fuse Marx and Freud.”
4. Reich, *Function of the Orgasm*, xix, 73, xxxi, 114. Reich writes, “That which is alive is in itself reasonable” (xxx). Reich’s antifascist politics underscore all of his writing, but for clear articulations of his position, see Reich, *Mass Psychology of Fascism* and *Sexual Revolution*.
5. Reich, “Orgonomic Functionalism,” translated by Therese Pol, in *Selected Writings*, 284.
6. Reich, *Function of the Orgasm*, 200. See also Pietikainen, “Utopianism in Psychology,” 166.
7. Traymore, “Dangerously Sensual.”
8. See D’Emilio and Freedman, *Intimate Matters*, 285–88; Kinsey, Pomeroy, and Martin *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male*; Kinsey, Pomeroy, Martin, and Gebhardt, *Sexual Behavior in the Human Female*.
9. The *Gidget* beach movie series had begun in 1959, and the second and third in the “Frankie and Annette” *Beach Party* series, *Muscle Beach Party*

- and *Bikini Beach*, were both released in 1964. See web pages for individual movie titles, imdb.com, accessed October 2011. The James Bond series began with *Dr. No*'s release in 1963 and *From Russia with Love* in 1964. " 'Official James Bond Series' Titles (Sorted by Release Date, ascending)," accessed May 2014, http://www.imdb.com/search/keyword?keywords=official-james-bond-series&sort=release_date,asc&mode=detail&page=1. On television, married sexuality appeared in *I Love Lucy* (1951–61), in the middle-class version of Kennedy family Camelot offered by *The Dick Van Dyke Show* (1961–66), and then in the macabre but openly passionate relationship of Morticia and Gomez on *The Addams Family* (1964–66). See Traymore, "Dangerously Sensual," 43–50, 76–84. The "sexy single girl" was a category made popular by Helen Gurley Brown in *Sex and the Single Girl* in 1962.
10. Hefner, *Playboy Philosophy*, 94; and Reich, "Orgonomic Functionalism," 284.
 11. See Traymore, "Dangerously Sensual," 53–57. She cites articles from 1963 and 1964 in the *Saturday Review*, *Redbook*, *Reader's Digest*, *Modern Bride*, and *Ladies' Home Journal* that "suggested a general consensus in postwar American society that a lack of interest in marital sex was cause for alarm, and, conversely, that a fulfilling sex life had become a necessary component of marriage" (57).
 12. See Friedan, "The Sexual Sell" and "The Sex-Seekers," in *Feminine Mystique* (1963), esp. 217, 234, 235, 263–284. For brief discussions of the feminist resistance to the idea of the sexual revolution, see Allyn, *Make Love, Not War*, 5; O'Neill, *Coming Apart* (1971), 198–99.
 13. Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man* (1964), chap. 3, available on Herbert Marcuse Official Homepage, accessed 9 June 2014, <http://www.marcuse.org/herbert/index.html>.
 14. Foucault, *History of Sexuality*, 131.
 15. *Ibid.*, 157, 155. For interpretations of how exactly countering the grips of power with bodies and pleasures would go forward (a topic on which Foucault is famously vague), see Oksala, "Anarchic Bodies," 99–121; and Whitebook, "Michel Foucault," 52–70.
 16. Foucault, "Maurice Blanchot," 16. Oksala names such thoughts from outside "limit experiences" ("Anarchic Bodies," 110). Foucault aligns his philosophy with literature because there, "experience has the function of wrenching the subject from itself." See "Interview with Michel Foucault," by D. Trombadori (1978), in Foucault, *Power*, 241.
 17. Reich, *Function of the Orgasm*, 79 (emphasis in the original); see also 85.
 18. Schneemann, e-mail to author, 30 April 2012. Schneemann mentions her "Reichian convictions" in various letters. See Schneemann, *Correspondence Course*, 61, 164, 208, 247, 251. On his Reichian convictions, see also James Tenney to Carolee Schneemann, 12–13 February 1970, in *ibid.*, 168–69.
 19. The feminist reading of Schneemann's work began in the late 1970s when critic Lucy Lippard took up Schneemann's work *Eye Body* (1963), a performance for the camera, in two articles on recent women's art practice. See Lippard, "Quite Contrary," 36; and Lippard, "Pains and Pleasures of Rebirth," 75. The statement published in explanation of *Eye Body* in Schneemann's 1979 book *More Than Meat Joy* similarly frames *Eye Body*, sixteen years after it was made, in relation to the overtly feminist work the artist was involved with at the time she was working on the book. See Schneemann, "Eye Body," in *More Than Meat Joy*, 52.
 20. On Schneemann's work as such a defense, see Fuchs, "Staging the Obscene Body," 33; Cameron, "In the Flesh," in Schneemann, *Up to and Including Her Limits*, 11; Sayre, *Object of Performance*, 74–75, 96; Banes, *Greenwich Village*, 226–27; and Lee, *Chronophobia*, 204, 202.
 21. Schneemann, "Eye Body," 52.
 22. Rebecca Schneider places Schneemann within a feminist lineage oriented toward the disruption of boundaries in modern and contemporary art, and sees Schneemann's work as a presentation of the feminine both as construct and as essence, and thus a version of Irigarayan "both-at-once" femininity that was ahead of its time. See Schneider, *Explicit Body in Performance*, 36.
 23. The full quotation from Schneemann's notes: "For instance, several artists in the 60's embraced Reichian principles as a thrust against authoritarian, manipulative control of personal lives in which we saw a full sexual integrity implying social awareness technological and economic penetrations, profit, exploitation, expansionism—that the sexual personal insights would open social ones; now this seems naive, preposterous. The 'sexual liberation' of the '60's was elaborated in the media as a self-serving pleasure

- principle abjuring the difficult work of analyzing the surrounding social and political issues). . . . But after making statements and descriptions, finally what I'd like to communicate is that all this happens some place in the mind that is nonverbal, indescribable." Schneemann, untitled note, series I, box 6, folder 3: "More Than Meat Joy" [1977], Carolee Schneemann Papers, Getty Research Institute Special Collections.
24. See Schneemann, "Interior Scroll," in *Imaging Her Erotics*, 150–61.
 25. Wagner, "Rodin's Reputation," 191–242; Wagner, *Three Artists, Three Women*; Wagner, "Bourgeois Prehistory"; Wagner, *Mother Stone*.
 26. Kahn, "Let Me Hear My Body Talk," 248.
 27. Schneemann to Jean-Jacques Lebel, 19 September 1962, in *Correspondence Course*, 61. Lebel is credited with bringing the happening to France. See Stiles, "Performance Art," in Stiles and Selz, *Theories and Documents of Contemporary Art*, 683; and Pierre Restany, "J.J. 2: The Jean-Jacques Rousseau of Libertarian Humanism," in Hegyi and Schrage, *Jean-Jacques Lebel*, 124–25. See also Lebel, *Le Happening* (1966); and Lebel, *La Poésie de la Beat Generation* (1965.)
 28. When Lebel came to New York in November 1961, he quickly made contact with Allan Kaprow and other happenings artists. During his stay (until February 1962), he held an exhibition of his painting-collages at the March Gallery on Tenth Street; he read the work of Benjamin Péret in a poetry reading at the Living Theatre; he performed (with Schneemann) in Claes Oldenburg's *Store Days*; he made a sculptural entry in the Hall of Issues at the Judson Church: according to Nan Robertson, it was a "bomb . . . painted in vivid colors, plastered with photos of young men in muscle magazines and perched upon a coffin-like box, open at the front and fitted with a flashing red light." See Gunter Berghaus, "Happenings in Europe," in Stanford, *Happenings and Other Acts*, 351; Stiles, "Uncorrupted Joy: International Art Actions," in Schimmel and Stiles, *Out of Actions*, 250; Lebel, *Retour d'exil*, 65–66; and Robertson, "A Hall of Issues Opens in 'Village,'" *New York Times*, 4 December 1961, 38.
 29. Schneemann to Lebel, February 1964, in Schneemann, *More Than Meat Joy*, 62. All ellipses original except those bracketed.
 30. Schneemann to Tenney, telegram, 30 May 1964, in *Correspondence Course*, 83, spelling original.
 31. Schneemann to Tenney, 30 May 1964, in *Correspondence Course*, 85.
 32. This quotation and the next: Schneemann to Tenney, 3 June 1964, in *Correspondence Course*, 87 (emphasis in the original). Jocelyn de Noblet was a member of Lebel's circle, and he eventually founded the Centre de Recherche sur la Culture Technique at the École Nationale Supérieure des Arts Décoratifs in Paris.
 33. Schneemann, "Istory of a Girl Pornographer" (1974), in *More Than Meat Joy*, 194.
 34. See, for example, Reich's student and biographer Myron Sharaf, committed to "changes in sexual attitudes." Myron R. Sharaf, "Wilhelm Reich" (1970), in Boadella, *In the Wake of Reich*, 6. More examples discussed in the following paragraphs.
 35. Mary Higgins, "Forward" (1961), in Reich, *Function of the Orgasm*, xi.
 36. Schneemann, note from 1963, in *More Than Meat Joy*, 57–58.
 37. David Boadella similarly saw Reich's "powerful critique of authoritarian society" as "helping people to lead more integrated lives in which the head and the body spoke the same language as the heart." David Boadella, "Love-Life and Society," in Boadella, *In the Wake of Reich*, 3. Sharaf was convinced that "Reich's work can help us to understand . . . the obstacles, internal and external, in the way of the development of a free man in a free society." Sharaf, "Wilhelm Reich," 14.
 38. Alexander Lowen, "Bio-energetic Analysis: A Development of Reichian Therapy," in Boadella, *In the Wake of Reich*, 48.
 39. Schneemann, copy of journal entry page, no title, dated "Nov '68," box 27, folder 6: "Corresp. 1967," Schneemann Papers.
 40. Lowen, *Love and Orgasm*, 12.
 41. Schneemann, note from 1963, in *More Than Meat Joy*, 57.
 42. Schneemann to Tenney, 9 May 1964, in *Correspondence Course*, 76–77.
 43. Schneemann, notes from 1966, in *More Than Meat Joy*, 59.
 44. Schneemann to Tenney, 9 May 1964, 77.
 45. Schneemann, *More Than Meat Joy*, 22. Schneemann later remembered Ratner as having "an adorable, petite, curvy body. I was always happy seeing her in motion." Schneemann, e-mail to author, 9 June 2014.
 46. Schneemann, *More Than Meat Joy*, 22.
 47. Reich, *Function of the Orgasm*, 66.
 48. Reich, *Selected Writings*, xxiii.

49. Though Robinson admitted that Reich's concept of "visual, measurable, and applicable" orgone energy was "embarrassingly concrete," there was something compelling, or "refreshing" for him about the boldness with which "Reich . . . pushed psycho-analysis to the utmost biological extreme, reducing all of psychic life to a manifestation of bodily streamings and spasms." Robinson, *Freudian Left*, 19, 64, 55, 60.
50. Reich, "Orgonomic Functionalism," 191. See Schneemann, note from 1960–62, in *More Than Meat Joy*, 14; and Pierre Restany, "A Guru of Non-Verbal Communication" (1977), in *More Than Meat Joy*, 279.
51. This quotation and the next: Schneemann, note from 1963, *More Than Meat Joy*, 12.
52. Schneemann, "University of Illinois 1960," 1960, series I, box 1, folder 1: "Labyrinth, 1960," Schneemann Papers.
53. This and the next two quotations: Schneemann, note beginning "Form is Emotion," 13.
54. This and remaining quotations in this paragraph, Schneemann, "I Assume the Senses Crave," in *More Than Meat Joy*, 9–10. This essay was not published before *More Than Meat Joy* in 1979, and, according to Schneemann, was not written for any specific audience or occasion. Schneemann, e-mail to author, 28 March 2006.
55. This and the following quotation, Schneemann, untitled typescript, question-response format, not dated (in a file with other notes from 1960–1963), box 6, folder 3: "More Than Meat Joy," Schneemann Papers.
56. Greenberg, "Jackson Pollock: Inspiration, Vision, Intuitive Decision," *Vogue* (1967), in Greenberg, *Collected Essays*, 4:246.
57. Fried, "Three American Painters: Kenneth Noland, Jules Olitski, Frank Stella" (1965), in *Art and Objecthood: Essays and Reviews*, 224.
58. Seitz, "The Realism and Poetry of Assemblage," in *The Art of Assemblage*, 81–92. Schneemann in taped interview, "More Than Meat Joy," 12.
59. See Dine, *Jim Dine: Walking Memory 1959–1969* (1999).
60. Schneemann presented work in Judson Dance Theater Concerts #3, #7, and #13. See Banes, *Democracy's Body*, 79. For information on Tenney, see Schneemann, *More Than Meat Joy*, esp. 7, and box 1, folder 6, box 27, folders 1, 4, and box 36, folder 1, Schneemann Papers. For narratives of Fluxus that helpfully situate Corner, see Friedman, "Fluxus and Company," in *The Fluxus Reader*, 244; and Higgins, *Fluxus Experience*, esp. p 51 and 213, on Corner's *Piano Activities* (1962).
61. Schneemann, "Newspaper Event," in *More Than Meat Joy*, 32.
62. This quotation and the next, Schneemann, "What Is a Dancer?" (1963), in *More Than Meat Joy*, 17–18.
63. On this debate, see Potts, "Autonomy in Post-War Art," 43–59.
64. "Chromelodeon" was originally the name given to a forty-three tone reed organ built by experimental composer Harry Partch in 1945. Partch emphasized the "corporeal" dimension of his music as against the "abstract" musical system that had dominated in Western culture since Bach. See Yang, "Harry Partch, the Hobo Orientalist," in *California Polyphony: Ethnic Voices, Musical Crossroads*, 55–56; and the Harry Partch website, *Corporeal Meadows*, accessed 9 June 2014, <http://www.corporeal.com>.
65. Schneemann, script for *Chromelodeon*, in *More Than Meat Joy*, 39 (spelling original).
66. The evening was organized by Corner and Fluxus ring-master Dick Higgins and included a performance of La Monte Young's *Poem for Chairs, Tables, Benches*, which Rainer had used for *Three Seascapes* the previous March. See chap. 1. *Glass Environment's* cast included future Judson dancers, Rainer and Arlene Rothlein, along with Andre Cadet, Malcolm Goldstein, and Judy Ratner. See the program for a performance event at the Living Theater, May 1–2, 1962, reproduced in *More Than Meat Joy*, 23.
67. Schneemann, *More Than Meat Joy*, 21.
68. Schneemann, e-mail to author, 28 March 2006.
69. See Schneemann "Fragments of a Score—*Environment for Sounds and Motions*," box 1, folder 3: "Environment for Sound and Motion, 1962," Schneemann Papers.
70. Schneemann, *More Than Meat Joy*, 22.
71. On Rothlein, see Banes, *Democracy's Body*, xviii. On Schneemann's entrance onto the Judson Dance Theater scene, see Banes, *Democracy's Body*, 68, 94; and *More Than Meat Joy*, 32.
72. This quotation and the next, *More Than Meat Joy*, 34.
73. *More Than Meat Joy*, 35. The role assignment, again, corresponded for Schneemann to the body of the specific person. Alongside Hay as "Shoulders/Arms," Rainer played "Neck/Feet," the six-foot tall Ruth Emerson was "Legs/Face," Rothlein played "Spine," Carol Summers played

- "Hands," Elaine Summers played "Head," John Worden played "Fingers." See *More Than Meat Joy*, 32.
74. "NEWSPAPER EVENT, Special notes to the performers" [typed in red], box 1, folder 2: "Newspaper Event, 12/62," Schneemann Papers.
 75. *More Than Meat Joy*, 37.
 76. This quotation and the next, Johnston, "From Lovely Confusion to Naked Breakfast," *Village Voice*, 18 July 1963, 12.
 77. Schneemann quotes Reich (*Selected Writings*, 291) in note beginning "Form is Emotion," 14.
 78. All information about *Chromelodeon* in this and the following paragraph from Schneemann, *More Than Meat Joy*, 37, 43–45.
 79. Schneemann, program notes for *Round House*, box 18, folder 2: "Notebooks 1967," Schneemann Papers.
 80. Banes, *Democracy's Body*, 172–74.
 81. Mimeographed interview (interviewer's name not given), box 1, folder 6: "Lateral Splay, 11/63," Schneemann Papers; see also Schneemann, *More Than Meat Joy*, 47.
 82. In London, Schneemann presented only fragments of *Meat Joy* in what is described on the program for the event as "A Collage Happening." It appeared as one of six happenings in an evening, one not always clearly distinguished from another. See Lebel, program for "A Collage Happening," reproduced in Lebel, *Retour d'exil*, 92. The program includes this statement: "Happening is not a spectacle that one looks at from the outside, but a collective dream which demands a psychological participation from all those present." See also Peter Duval Smith, "Happenings," *Financial Times* (London), 9 June 1964, n.p.; box 64, folder 1: "Clippings, 1962–64," Schneemann Papers; and White, *Empty Seats*, 77.
 83. Gaisseau (b. 1923) was a French filmmaker whose *Le Ciel et la Boue*—a documentary about a seven-month trek by a group of Europeans through Irian Jaya in 1959—had been released in 1961. Narration focused on the "savageness" of the villagers and their rituals. *Meat Joy* did not air on television. Gaisseau brought a crew with four cameras from Paris to do the filming, but three of the cameras jammed at some point in the process. The final film is composed of the fragments from the one functioning camera. Schneemann, e-mail to author, 28 March 2006.
 84. [No author included on clipping], "Le Workshop de la libre expression," *France Observateur*, 4 June 1964, n.p., box 64, folder 1: "Clippings, 1962–64," Schneemann Papers. Pierre Restany refers to Renoir as "former superstar of Alain Bernardin's world famous Crazy Horse (Striptease) Saloon." See *More Than Meat Joy*, 279. Jean Duvignaud maintains that Renoir was known as "la tragédienne du strip-tease." He recalls seeing her at the Crazy Horse Saloon in an act that involved a bamboo cage. This quote from Renoir, included in his reflections, may give some sense of what she was like as a performer: "Quand j'ai fait un bon strip-tease, quand ça a bien marché, il s'est passé quelque chose entre le public et moi et quelque chose de vrai, quelque chose qui existe. . . . C'était une chose directement sexuelle entre les spectateurs et moi." See Duvignaud, "Pêle-mêle: La Chronique de Régine Deforges, Crazy Horse," *Journal l'humanité* (23 mai 2001), accessed 20 November 2006, <http://www.humanite.fr>.
 85. Pomerelle's work, *Kiss Me*, was performed the evening previous to *Meat Joy* as part of Lebel's festival. See "Programme du Workshop de la Libre Expression," reproduced in Lebel, *Retour d'exil*, 91.
 86. Seiler appeared as the valet in the film *Les Gorilles*, directed by Jean Girault, in 1964, which explains one critic's reference to him as "une sorte de gorille glabre [bald gorilla]." See R. K., "Orgies à l'orgeat."
 87. Accessed 15 April 2008, <http://www.anninano-seigallery.com>. In 1964, Nosei was in Paris, having previously been a student in Italy. Even though her English was spotty at best, she functioned as Schneemann's primary translator during *Meat Joy*'s rehearsal process with the French performers. Schneemann, e-mail to author, 28 March 2006.
 88. Schneemann, e-mail, 28 March 2006.
 89. Renoir performed/recited Joyce Mansour's "ON-DU-LA-TI-ON" with the assistance of "des structures sonores de Jacques Seiler." See "Programme du Workshop de la Libre Expression," 91.
 90. Schneemann, e-mail to author, 9 June 2014. Irina Posner was forbidden by her boyfriend from performing on the last night of the performance.
 91. Documents that stand for the work today include Schneemann's score, drawings, and notes, photographs, audience descriptions, and fragments of TV studio film footage. I do not discuss any of Schneemann's drawings related to *Meat Joy* directly in this chapter, but they

- visually confirm many physical interactions (rising, falling, flowing, mixing) that Schneemann describes in her letters and in the score. The score for the work published in *More Than Meat Joy*, on which I base the following account, is derived from the New York version performed at Judson, though criticism suggests that the changes made in the five months separating this *Meat Joy* from the Paris and London performances did not substantially alter the work. See examples discussed below. Schneemann, Score for *Meat Joy*, in *More Than Meat Joy*, 67–81.
92. Schneemann, "Meat Joy Notes as Prologue" (1964), in *More Than Meat Joy*, 65–66.
 93. See Jones, "Clothes Make the Man," 25–26; Rosenthal, "Assisted Levitation," 123–25.
 94. Schneemann, *More Than Meat Joy*, 79.
 95. Picard wrote, "But let me congratulate you for your Meat-Joy which in parts will haunt me. There are also some parts, which I think were to [sic] near to 'Cabaret & Revue' & I hope you will understand that this is meant as an honest criticism." Note from Lil Picard to CS, May 1964, box 27, folder 3: "Correspondence 1964," Schneemann Papers.
 96. Schneemann, *More Than Meat Joy*, 80.
 97. Quotation in this sentence and the following one: Ibid., 81.
 98. This and the next two quotations: Smith, "Theatre: Meat Joy," 5.
 99. R. K., "Orgies à l'orgeat."
 100. "Now, the SI," *Internationale Situationniste*, no. 9 (1964), in Knabb, *Situationist International Anthology*, 175.
 101. Schneemann, copy of Journal entry page, no title, dated "Nov '68."
 102. "The Avant-Garde of Presence," *Internationale Situationniste*, no. 8 (January 1963) in Knabb, *Situationist International Anthology*, 109.
 103. See photo with Duchamp in the audience in Capar, "En plein coeur de Paris"; R. K., "Orgies à l'orgeat"; and "Programme du Workshop de la Libre Expression," 91.
 104. Though ousted from the Surrealist group in 1959 after only three years as an official member, Lebel maintained a friendship with André Breton, who had played a mentoring role in Lebel's life since he was a teenager. On Lebel's relation to Breton, see Stiles, "Uncorrupted Joy," 252–53. On Surrealist membership, see Gunnar B. Kvaren, "Lebel/Rebel," in Hegyi and Schrage, *Jean-Jacques Lebel*, 52–53.
 105. McClure, *Meat Science Essays* (1963), 8. See Schneemann to Jean-Jacques Lebel, February 1964, in *More Than Meat Joy*, 62. On the influence of Jackson Pollock, Charles Olson, and Artaud—all important cultural referents for Schneemann as well—upon McClure's *The New Book/A Book of Torture*, see Kahn, "Cruelty and the Beast: Antonin Artaud and Michael McClure," in *Noise, Water, Meat*, 322–358.
 106. As Kahn's research reveals, by 1968, Lebel knew McClure well enough to send him—and Allen Ginsberg—copies of the recording of Artaud reading *To Have Done with the Judgment of God*, "liberated from the vaults of the RTF in Paris during the events of May 1968." See Kahn, *Noise, Water, Meat*, 344. On Artaud's status in Europe, see Kahn, *Noise, Water, Meat*, 325.
 107. For an excellent account of the similar aims of Situationist détournement projects in the 1960s, see Kelly Baum, "The Sex of the Situationist International," *October* 126 (Fall 2008): 23–43. Baum's Situationist examples stick to printed matter as medium, while Lebel ventured into performance, but both sets of work take on the same risk, discussed by Baum, that the reproduction of spectacle culture's image strategies will only extend their power rather than critique them.
 108. See Lebel's script and photographs from *For Exorcising the Spirit of Catastrophe* in Kaprow, *Assemblage, Environments, Happenings*, 234.
 109. Indeed much of Lebel's painting and performance work from the 1960s took up and combined themes of sex and violence. See Hegyi and Schrage, *Jean-Jacques Lebel*, examples throughout the book.
 110. See "Programme du Workshop de la Libre Expression," 91. Vostell quoted in Stiles, "Uncorrupted Joy," 275.
 111. See Jörn Merkert, "Vostell—Chronologie, 1954–1974," translated by Sabine Wolf, in Vostell, *Environnements/Happenings, 1958–1974*, 42–44.
 112. Stiles, "Uncorrupted Joy," 278.
 113. In a catalog of European happenings compiled by Vostell and Jürgen Becker, *You* is not listed as the work performed in Paris at the "American Art Center" in 1964. They list simply "Libre Expression" as a title. See Becker and Vostell, *Happenings*, 56.
 114. Smith, "Happenings."
 115. That they were the images from *Eye Body* is confirmed in Schneemann to Lebel, 1 March 1964, in *Correspondence Course*, 73. For a

discussion of *Eye Body*, see Archias, “The Body as a Material,” 59–78.

116. This and the following quotation: White, *Empty Seats*, 77, 78.
117. Smith, “Happenings.”
118. Johnston, *Lesbian Nation*, 266.
119. This and the next two quotations: Johnston, “Dance,” 13.
120. As above, “Proto-feminist Body” is the title Schneemann gave to the chapter on her early work in her second book of documentations. See Schneemann, *Imaging Her Erotics*, 19.

Chapter 3. Reasons to Move

1. There is some dispute about whether 3 *Adaptation Studies* were shown in *Information*. Acconci believes they were. Vito Acconci, e-mail to author, 28 July 2013. The catalog does not list any of them by name, but includes a disclaimer about the list being inaccurate. See McShine, *Information*, 193.
2. Most of these first published appearances consisted of a few documentary photographs accompanied by brief descriptions written by Acconci. See Acconci, “Hand & Mouth Piece,” 142; “Interview with Vito Acconci,” 22; “Notebook: On Activity and Performance,” 68–69; “Blindfolded Catching Piece,” cover; “Blindfolded Catching,” “Hand & Mouth,” and “Soap & Eyes,” *Avalanche*, no. 6 (Fall 1972): 18–20; “Adaptation Studies,” 190–95; image of *Hand & Mouth* in *Catalogue of Headlines and Images*, 15. On the new journals (including Acconci’s own *o to 9*, as well as *Avalanche* and *Interfunktionen*) and their editors’ understanding of their contribution to art’s conceptual turn, see Allen, *Artists Magazines*, chaps. 3, 4, and 8.
3. Acconci mentions psychologist Kurt Lewin, for example, as someone whose work on “power fields” he read in the 1960s. See Acconci, interview by Béar, 71. The term *adaptation* appeared as early as 1969 in Acconci’s notes for *Following Piece*. See Acconci, *Diary of a Body*, 77.
4. See Acconci, “Adaptation Studies,” 190–95; Acconci, *Diary of a Body*, 183–85; and Selye, *Stress of Life*, 121. The “stages” appear in Acconci’s 1972 issue of *Avalanche* as well, but they are not as clearly linked with distinct performances. See *Avalanche*, no. 6 (Fall 1972): 18–20. Shulamith Firestone’s *Dialectic of Sex* (a text Acconci read, discussed further below) included “adaptation” in one phase of the narrative of human history

she borrowed and modified from Friedrich Engels (215–16). When asked, Acconci did not remember exactly what he was reading circa 1970 about adaptation, though he was sure there were some texts. Acconci, e-mail to author, 18 July 2007. See also discussion of antbehaviorism below.

5. Acconci, *Diary of a Body*, 183.
6. Wiegand, “Acconci Finally Finds Himself,” 54.
7. Acconci, *Diary of a Body*, 184.
8. See Acconci, “Vito Acconci,” *Avalanche*, 2ff.
9. Acconci, *Diary of a Body*, 19–283.
10. The earliest example of a poststructuralist argument about Acconci’s work as a “vision of the self’s social construction” is presented in Linker, *Vito Acconci*, esp. 47. Craig Dworkin argues for the deep sympathies between Acconci’s work and poststructuralist semiotic theory—invested in showing the body’s inseparability from language—but also that Acconci resists “cultural networks of discourse” by disrupting the smooth flow of information with “noise” brought by “improper” inscriptions (111). This book argues that Acconci’s poetry and performances offer something more dialectical than Dworkin’s noise-against-language binary allows. Structure is not given over to unjust cultural inscription but retained as a tool, a form, for the creative enabling of social life. See Dworkin, “Fugitive Signs,” 103–10. Few of the existing arguments in the literature fully consign Acconci to the reproduction of symptoms, but they often hold out this dimension as his work’s most important feature, only secondarily recognizing its humor, bodily particularity, skillful (if uncomfortable) breach of boundaries, and persistent figuration of feeling. This chapter is indebted to all of this scholarship, but attempts to allow the latter list of qualities to play as preeminent a critical place in an interpretation of Acconci’s work as its negative aspects in order to argue for the struggle that it productively and optimistically stages as art. On Acconci’s performance of the threatened possibilities for being heard and legitimated in late modernity’s public sphere, see Ward, “Acconci: ‘Public Space is Wishful Thinking,’” in *No Innocent Bystanders*, 53–80. On the performance of an unsustainable, self-destructive masculine position, see Jones, “The Body in Action: Vito Acconci and the ‘Coherent’ Male Artistic Subject,” in *Body Art*, 103–50. On the performance of period anxieties surrounding

- relationships in urban settings, see McDonough, "Crimes of the Flaneur," 101–22. On *Conversions*, Part III's reassertion of the category of the feminine while denying the embodied woman "a presence in it," see Blocker, *What the Body Cost*, 11–12.
11. Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*; Butler, *Gender Trouble*. The argument sketched out in this and the following two paragraphs is the one I made in my dissertation. See Archias, "Body as a Material," 269–76.
 12. Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses."
 13. Foucault, *History of Sexuality*, 147.
 14. Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," 87.
 15. Butler, "Bodies and Power Revisited," 187.
 16. On New York artists' activism, see Bryan-Wilson, *Art Workers*. For a selection of texts written early in the feminist movement in New York in the late 1960s, see Koedt, Levine, and Rapone, *Radical Feminism*.
 17. Firestone, *Dialectics of Sex*, 14. Acconci named Firestone's book in an interview in 2003 as one of the most influential texts from the second-wave feminist movement that he read circa 1970. See Wavelet, "Interview with Acconci and Rainer," 27–28. For a discussion of *Seedbed* in the context of the early second-wave feminist movement, see Archias, "Body as a Material," 288–301.
 18. Andre, untitled statements, *Interfunktionen*, no. 5 (November 1970): back cover; and *Interfunktionen*, no. 6 (1971): back cover.
 19. Wavelet, "Interview with Acconci and Rainer," 23, 27.
 20. Nemser, "Subject-Object Body Art," 42. The term *body art* or *body work* began to gain currency in 1970. In addition to Nemser's article, Acconci's work was featured in the exhibition *Body Works* at Breen's Bar, San Francisco, 18 October 1970, and in an untitled interview between Willoughby Sharp, Terry Fox, Dennis Oppenheim, and Acconci, *Avalanche* (Winter 1971): 96.
 21. "Interview with Vito Acconci," 21. A couple of months later, Acconci similarly said he was "concerned with the mental superstructure or process that is applied to everyday things and events." See Acconci, "Notes from a Conversation Tape," n.p. Linker cites Acconci's experience enduring and adapting to ruthlessly violent exercises while training in the Marine Platoon Leader Corps while in college in the late 1950s as an influence on the aggressive language and harsh structures in his later work. See Linker, *Vito Acconci*, 11.
 22. "Interview with Vito Acconci," 21, 23. A source for Acconci for the notion of roles or "social fronts" was sociologist Erving Goffman. See Goffman, *Presentation of Self*, 22–30. It was to Goffman's view of the normal that Acconci referred when he said, "Healthy would be the mask" in a 1971 interview. See Acconci, "Notes from a Conversation Tape," n.p.
 23. See, for example, Butler and Mark, *WACK! Art and Bryan-Wilson, Art Workers*, 12–39.
 24. See Meltzer, *Systems We Have Loved*, esp. 57–64.
 25. "Interview with Vito Acconci," 22.
 26. Butler, preface to *Gender Trouble*, 1999, quoted in *Judith Butler Reader*, 101.
 27. This understanding is formulated in dialogue with Briony Fer in *The Infinite Line*, though not derived from it. Fer argues for ways certain artists in the 1960s (Piero Manzoni and Blinky Palermo are two compellingly argued examples) revealed deep structural dynamics within capitalism, and then articulated alternate subjective processes that take shape within and through disintegration, decentering, and the absurd absence of value. Acconci, by contrast, presents the effects of harsh structures on a body and persists in the expectation that such an aesthetic language will communicate with his viewer on a shared level of felt understanding. See Fer, *Infinite Line*.
 28. Silverman, *Subject of Semiotics*, 173, 77.
 29. Anne Wagner has shown that a concern for the audience was a structuring concern for many artists circa 1970 in the United States, including Acconci. See Wagner, "Performance, Video," 59–80.
 30. Lefebvre (*Critique of Everyday Life*) also writes helpfully about adaptation: "There is something tenaciously resistant within this organized or possibly overorganized sphere, which makes form adapt and modify. Form either fails or improves; and this is how it manages to go on living" (65).
 31. See Acconci's collected poetic writings, published and unpublished, in his *Language to Cover a Page*.
 32. See Linker, *Vito Acconci*, 11; Wavelet, "Interview with Acconci and Rainer," 13; Jackson, "Jackson Talks with Acconci," 2.
 33. Acconci in Moore, "o to 9 and Back Again," 81;

- Dworkin, "Fugitive Signs," 90–113. The next quotation in this paragraph is on page 100 of this text.
34. This quotation and the next, Acconci, interview by Béar, 71, 74, 75. In the much later interview with Moore, Acconci mentions Pound's importance to him again along with William Carlos Williams: "In the back of my mind I would have the sentence by William Carlos Williams: 'no idea but in things'—he wanted things to be as concrete as possible, as specific as possible." Moore, "o to 9 and Back Again," 76.
 35. Pound, *Literary Essays*, 12; and Pound to Harriet Moore, January 1915, in Paige, *Letters of Ezra Pound*, 49. To write in this way, for Pound, was furthermore the writer's civic responsibility; keeping language's application to the world and experience precise was a political act, what he called literature's "function in the state." See Pound, "How to Read," 1928, in *Literary Essays*, 21. Pound believed that "peace comes of communication. . . . The whole of great art is a struggle for communication." See Pound, "Henry James," in *Literary Essays*, 298.
 36. Acconci, interview by Béar, 75 (emphasis in the original).
 37. Simpson, "Pound's Wordsworth," 676. Jennifer Ashton has recently discussed the dialectic between specificity and abstraction in Pound as a "fundamental impossibility" inherited by twentieth-century American poets who held that immediate experience and universality could never exist simultaneously in a work of art. Acconci's performances, I would argue, influenced by Pound, seem to maintain this aspiration. See Ashton, *From Modernism to Postmodernism*, 134.
 38. Simpson, "Pound's Wordsworth," 676.
 39. This and the following quotations: Ashton, *From Modernism to Postmodernism*, 140, 129. On Acconci's publication record and poetic concerns that saw him poised to become a language poet, see Dworkin, "Fugitive Signs," 98.
 40. On "RE," see Dworkin, "Fugitive Signs," 93–94; and Kotz, *Words to Be Looked At*, 154–55.
 41. Vito Acconci, untitled poem, 1968, in *Vito Hannibal Acconci Studio*, back cover, originally published as Vito Acconci, "Now I Will Tell You a Secret . . .," *Toothpick*, Fall 1973, n.p. Information from Sarina Basta et al., "Chronology," in Acconci, *Vito Hannibal Acconci Studio*, 451.
 42. Johns's influence on Acconci has also been documented in Linker, *Vito Acconci*, 12; and discussed in Dworkin, "Introduction: Delay in Verse," in Acconci, *Language to Cover a Page*, xiii–xiv. Dworkin explores the "formal procedures" discussed in Johns's notes, emphasizing a Wittgensteinian approach which Acconci shared with Johns and used to examine ordinary language, but his discussion excludes the procedures found in Johns's paintings.
 43. Acconci, "Notes from a Conversation Tape," n.p. The "Sketchbook Notes" appeared with photographs of four paintings in the Spring 1965 issue of the journal *Art and Literature* (edited by the poet John Ashbery), which Acconci read regularly. See Johns, "Sketchbook Notes," *Art and Literature*, 185–92. (The next essay in the journal was Clement Greenberg's "Modernist Painting.") On *Art and Literature*, see also Moore, "o to 9 and Back Again," 76. Later, Acconci and Bernadette Mayer, his sister-in-law at the time, published more "Sketchbook Notes" in *o to 9*, the mimeographed journal they edited together between 1967 and 1969. See Jasper Johns, "Sketchbook Notes," *o To 9*, no. 6, 1–2, reprinted in Acconci and Mayer, *o to 9: The Complete Magazine, 1967–1969*.
 44. Acconci, interview by Béar, 76 (ellipses in original).
 45. The Jewish Museum retrospective ran February 16 to April 12, 1964. In the catalogue, the painting is titled *Large Target Construction*. See *Jasper Johns*, 27 and plate 4.
 46. Moore, "o to 9 and Back Again," 74 (ellipses and emphasis in original).
 47. Shannon, "Black Market," 92. See the revised and elaborated discussion of Johns in Shannon, *Disappearance of Objects*, 49–92.
 48. On Ashbery's editorships, see Perloff, "Transparent Selves," 172. Acconci's paragraph-long reviews appear in all issues of *Artnews* between November 1968 and December 1970. Ashbery kept this position until 1972, so he was editor when *Artnews* reviewed Acconci's work in March 1970. See Ratcliff, "Vito Hannibal Acconci," 10.
 49. Sol LeWitt, "Paragraphs on Conceptual Art."
 50. See Harrison, "Conceptual Art," in Perry and Wood, *Themes in Contemporary Art*.
 51. See Lippard, "Escape Attempts" (1973), in *Six Years*, vii–xxii; and Blake Stimson, "The Promise of Conceptual Art," in Stimson and Alberro, *Conceptual Art*, xl.

52. Acconci, "Ingeborg Glasser." Acconci's reviews were perhaps especially devoid of any overtly subjective response, compared with other blurbs in which terms more laden with judgment such as *master* and *attractive* frequently appeared. See "Reviews and Previews," January 1969, 22. Regarding Rainer, Acconci discussed his sympathies for what he understood to be the politics of the Judson aesthetic—that "Art . . . should be considered an activity . . . like any other"—in a 2003 interview. See Wavelet, "Interview with Acconci and Rainer," 23, 27.
53. This and the quotations in the following two sentences: Meltzer, *Systems We Have Loved*, 66, 69.
54. Kotz, *Words to Be Looked At*, 194.
55. Meltzer, *Systems We Have Loved*, 66.
56. Acconci, *Diary of a Body*, 184.
57. *Ibid.*, 20.
58. *Ibid.*, 26–28.
59. On her website, Piper writes that upon listening to the tape many years later, she was surprised by the "interpersonal undertones" of her conversation with Acconci. Piper, *Streetwork Streettracks*.
60. Acconci, "12 Pictures Notes," in *Diary of a Body*, 39, 41. Acconci did this performance twice on the evening of 28 May 1969, but it was only the photographs from the 11:00 performance that he presented afterward as the "end" of the piece.
61. Acconci, *Diary of a Body*, 44.
62. Miller, "Clock Stopper," 2.
63. Gilbard, "An Interview with Vito Acconci," 11.
64. A large portion of the series was exhibited for the first time in 1988 at the Rona Hoffman Gallery, Chicago. See Acconci, *Photographic Works*.
65. Acconci's exploration seems inspired by Maurice Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenology of Perception*, a key text for many artists in the United States, Europe, and Brazil during the 1960s. Acconci mentioned Merleau-Ponty in 1971. See "Interview with Vito Acconci," 20.
66. *Following Piece* took place October 3–25, 1969, with the omission of two days: October 12 and 16. Photographs on one day were taken by Betsy Jackson. See Acconci, *Diary of a Body*, 78–81. *Street Works IV* was curated by John Perreault in 1969. On *Following Piece*, see McDonough, "Crimes of the Flaneur," 101–22; Wagner, "Performance, Video," 62–66; Ward, *No Innocent Bystanders*, 61–64.
67. Henry Flynt made an argument in 1962 about the social value of the position of "the creep" in a lecture at Harvard University. Thanks to Hannah Higgins for drawing my attention to this lecture/text. See Flynt, "Significance of the Creep Personality."
68. See David Getsy, introduction, and Scott Burton, "Literalist Theater" (1970), in *Scott Burton: Collected Writings*, 18–20; 217–21.
69. Burton's *Individual Behavior Tableaux* (1980) were silent studies of provocative, often erotic gestures in slow motion. See *Scott Burton: Collected Writings*, 240–41.
70. Acconci, "Performance Test Notes," in *Diary of a Body*, 125.
71. Acconci, e-mail to author, 28 August 2007.
72. Acconci, *Diary of a Body*, 214–24.
73. *Centers* is central to the arguments put forward in two foundational articles on 1970s video art. See Krauss, "Video"; Wagner, "Performance, Video," 67–70.
74. Acconci, "Some Notes," 138. Acconci's notes and works (including *Hand & Mouth*, *Following Piece*, *Rubbing Piece*, and *Room Piece*) were featured on pp. 138–142 of this issue of *Interfunktionen*. Acconci was introduced to the German art world when John Gibson brought a series of film works to his booth at the Berlin art fair in late 1969. See Jones, "Profile of a Dealer," 4.
75. Acconci, "Some Notes," 138. Acconci's use of the term "side-effects" here echoes LeWitt: "Once the idea of a piece is established in the artist's mind and the final form is decided, the process is carried out blindly. There are many side-effects that the artist cannot imagine. These may be used as ideas for new works." See LeWitt, "Sentences on Conceptual Art," 4.
76. Acconci, "Some Notes," 138.
77. *Ibid.* All remaining quotes in this paragraph from this source and page.
78. See Jones, "Profile of a Dealer," 4. According to Acconci, he was drawn to the space because "Gibson subtitled his gallery: 'Projects For Commission'—I didn't want art-objects, I wanted fields, terrains, networks." Acconci, e-mail to author, 29 July 2013.
79. These new performances were *Control Box*, *Substitutions*, and *Untitled Project for Pier 17* (all 1971).
80. For example, the straightforward text that accompanied the photographs by John Chaffee of *Blindfolded Catching* read, "While I stand

- blindfolded, rubber balls are thrown at me, one at a time. Each time one hits me, I try to catch it (I try to anticipate when the next one will be thrown)." See Acconci, "On-Going Activities"; Perreault, "Cockroach Art," 23; and Acconci, *Diary of a Body*, 258–59.
81. *Proximity Piece* was titled *Room Situation (Proximity)* at this time. Other works in the "On-Going Activities and Situations" not discussed in this chapter: *Overtaking Piece* (1970), *Room Piece* (1970), *Rubbing Piece* (1970), *Learning Session* (1970), *Learning Piece* (1970), *Service Area* (1970), an untitled performance that involved Acconci leaving the key to his apartment at the School of Visual Arts in case he should die while traveling by airplane on an upcoming trip to Nova Scotia (1971), *Nine Minute Watch* (1971), *Passes* (1971), *Trials* (1971), *Association Area* (1971), and *Channel* (1971). See Acconci, "On-Going Activities."
 82. Domingo, "New York Galleries," 56–57.
 83. Nemser, "Subject-Object Body Art," 42.
 84. Perreault, "Cockroach Art," 21, 23.
 85. Addressing a tendency by critics *not* to grasp his emphasis on structure in an interview with Dutch sculptor and writer Louwrien Wijers, Acconci articulated one of his work's central dialectics: "I don't think the sense of the work as a whole has been very clear to others. I think a lot of people have seen individual pieces . . . as much more . . . expressionist, autobiographical, even personal to use a vague word. . . . I think the pieces have dealt with notions of person, have dealt with notions of autobiography, . . . have almost played with the notion of expression, but I don't think of the work as expressionist. . . . In fact, if anything, for me the work . . . might be if anything too much in the opposite direction. . . . It can be very schematic; it can be very structural, at least behind the scenes." Acconci, *Vito Acconci Talks to Louwrien Wijers*, 2. For an example of his later writing style, see Acconci, "Public Space in a Private Time," 900–918.
 86. Acconci, "Notes from a Conversation Tape," n.p.; and "Interview with Vito Acconci," 23.
 87. See Darwin, *On the Expression of Emotions*. A behavior study, Darwin's text was most concerned with "those actions which are least under voluntary control" (82), searching as he was for what "reveals [man's] animal descent" (251). A modern, like Pound, Darwin believed that scientific method and the realm of feeling that made meaning in human life possible were compatible.
- He was criticized for forwarding a mechanistic view of human being. Charles Sanders Pierce, for example, believed that "The *Origin of Species* . . . merely extends politico-economical views of progress to the entire realm of animal and vegetable life." Pierce, "Evolutionary Love," 363. In mobilizing involuntary reflexes explicitly in the place where one usually looked for artistic expression, Acconci was entering into an old conflict in modern thought between positivist and subjective understanding.
88. For the ethological perspective, see Lorenz, *Evolution and Modification of Behavior*, 29–78. Essayistic contributions to the discussion were offered by Wylie, *Magic Animal*, 64–85; Koestler, *Ghost in the Machine*, esp. 3–18, 104–112; and Koestler, "Man, One of Evolution's Mistakes?" 28ff. For the philosophy of mind perspective, see Place, "Is Consciousness a Brain Process?" 45–52. From the linguistics perspective, see Chomsky, review of *Verbal Behavior*, 26–58.
 89. See George Graham, "Behaviorism," *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2010), ed. Edward N. Zalta, accessed June 1, 2013, <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2010/entries/behaviorism/>; and Larry Hauser, "Behaviorism" (2005), *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, accessed 31 May 2013, <http://www.iep.utm.edu/behavior/#SSH2a.i>.
 90. Koestler, *Ghost in the Machine*, 6.
 91. Chomsky, review of *Verbal Behavior*, 26–58.
 92. Paul Ziff, "About Behaviourism," *Analysis* 18 (1958): 132–36, quoted in Hauser, "Behaviorism."
 93. Acconci, e-mail to author, 13 July 2013. Lorenz wrote the preface to the new edition of Darwin's *On the Expression of Emotions in Men and Animals* in 1965, the same year in which Lorenz's own polemical *Evolution and Modification of Behavior* was published. His collaboration with the Nazi party as a psychologist in the 1930s did not prevent his book *On Aggression* from becoming a best seller. Lorenz publicly regretted his Nazi sympathies and fears in a statement published when he received a Nobel Prize in 1973; his views on "inequality" nevertheless remained controversial. See Lorenz, preface to Darwin, *On the Expression of Emotions*, ix–xiii; Lorenz, *Evolution and Modification of Behavior*; Lorenz, *On Aggression*; Lorenz, "Autobiography"; Klopfer, "Lorenz and the National Socialists," 202–8.
 94. See Towarnicki, "Talk with Konrad Lorenz," 29.
 95. See Lorenz, *Evolution and Modification of*

- Behavior*, 29–78; Lorenz, *On Aggression*, 46–63. See also Wylie, *Magic Animal*, 64–85.
96. This and all remaining quotations in this paragraph: Towarnicki, “Talk with Konrad Lorenz,” 29.
 97. This and the following two quotations: Acconci, “Interview with Vito Acconci,” 21, 23, 22.
 98. See Meltzer, *Systems We Have Loved*, 117–52; Nisbet, *Ecologies, Environments, and Energy Systems*, 155–57.
 99. As quoted in this book’s introduction, Debord, *Society of the Spectacle*, 34.
 100. See Jones, “Body in Action,” 103–50, esp. 106–7, 136–50; Blocker, *What the Body Cost*, 11–12.
 101. Greenberg, “Exhibition of Willem de Kooning,” 229.
 102. There is nothing in Piper’s writings about *Catalysis* circa 1970 to suggest that considerations of racism motivated the making of the work, but due perhaps to later works by the artist that deal directly with the politics of race in US public life, *Catalysis* has been misrepresented as stemming from such concerns. See, for example, Bowles, *Adrian Piper*, 76, 125.
 103. Piper, “IV. Concretized Ideas I’ve Been Working Around” (January 1971), in *Out of Order, Out of Sight*, 1:42–45. See also 29–41, 46–54, in the same volume.
 104. Piper, interview with John Bowles, 22 April 2002, quoted in Bowles, *Adrian Piper*, 181.
 105. Piper, “Concretized Ideas,” 42.
 106. Brown, *Politics Out of History*, 13.
 107. See, for example, Huey Copeland’s discussion in *Bound to Appear*, 9–10.
 108. See Rainer, *Films of Yvonne Rainer*; Glahn, “Brechtian Journeys,” 76–93; Schneemann, *More Than Meat Joy*, 208–55; Blocker, *What the Body Cost*, 9–14; Linker, *Vito Acconci*, 44–46; Ward, *No Innocent Bystanders*, 43–80.
- “Private Property and Communism,” in *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts*, 107–9, 111.
6. To feel the significance of one’s sense perceptions at all, for Marx, is to experience them socially: “The meaning of an object for me goes only so far as my sense goes (has only a meaning for a sense corresponding to that object)—for this reason the *senses* of the social man *differ* from those of the non-social man.” Marx, “Private Property and Communism,” 108.
 7. Vázquez, *Art and Society*, 49.
 8. *Ibid.*, 11. Remaining quotations in this paragraph from this source, with page numbers in parentheses.
 9. Baryshnikov, foreword to Banes, Baryshnikov, and Harris, *Reinventing Dance in the 1960s*.
 10. Rainer in discussion with Joan Jonas following Rainer’s lecture “Where’s the Passion?” At the time of this book’s writing, Rainer has choreographed six new dances since 2000: *AG Indexical* (2006), *RoS Indexical* (2007), *Spiraling Down* (2008), *Assisted Living: Good Sports 2* (2011), *Assisted Living: Do You Have Any Money?* (2013), and *The Concept of Dust; or, How Do You Look When There’s Nothing Left to Move?* (2015).
 11. Lambert-Beatty discusses the appropriation of material from popular film in Rainer’s important transitional film *Lives of Performers*, in which dancers hold poses from the 1929 silent film *Pandora’s Box* for twenty seconds at a stretch, this duration simultaneously foregrounding physical strain and the code being cited. See Lambert-Beatty, *Being Watched*, 266.
 12. Rainer, *Work*, 75–83.
 13. Certeau, *Practice of Everyday Life*, xi, xxiv.
 14. Leslie, “Art and Revolution.”
 15. Pat Catterson, interview by author, 28 March 2011.
 16. *Spiraling Down* was commissioned by the J. Paul Getty Museum, Getty Research Institute, and the World Performance Project at Yale University. It premiered at the New Theater, Yale University, 14 November 2008, and has been performed since then in assorted venues in the United States, Latin America, and Europe.
 17. *Yvonne Rainer’s “RoS Indexical” and “Spiraling Down,”* performance, REDCAT, Los Angeles, 25–28 June 2009; *Yvonne Rainer’s “RoS Indexical” and “Spiraling Down,”* video recording, World Performance Project, Yale University, 2008; *Assisted Living: “Good Sports 2” and “Spiraling Down,”* Baryshnikov Arts Center, New York City, 16–19 March 2011.

Coda. Forming the Senses

1. Marx, “From the Albums of Poems Dedicated to Jenny Von Westphalen” (1836), in Marx and Engels, *Collected Works*, translated by Alex Miller, 1:517–30, poem on 521–22.
2. Marx, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts*, 75; Marx, *German Ideology*.
3. All Marx quotes in this paragraph from Marx, *German Ideology*.
4. See Lifshitz, *Philosophy of Art of Karl Marx*, 13.
5. Unless noted otherwise, all quotations in this paragraph and the next are from Karl Marx,

18. See photograph of *Suite for Five* by Martin Silver in Vaughn and Harris, *Merce Cunningham*, 90.
19. Valentine Worth, "Geoffrey Sonnabend's Obliscence: Theories of Forgetting and the Problem of Matter—An Encapsulation," in *The Vintage Book of Amnesia: An Anthology*, ed. Jonathan Lethem (New York: Vintage, 2000, 254). Source from Rainer, interview by author.
20. Haruki Murakami, *What I Talk About When I Talk About Running* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2008). Quote taken from *Spiraling Down* performance.
21. Rainer's inspiration for this part of the piece was Harun Farocki's *Deep Play* (2007), shown at *Documenta 12* (2007), which depicts footballers during their down time. She borrowed Farocki's footage, in fact, in preparation for the piece. See Thompson, "New Work," 3.
22. Rainer, interview by author.
23. Rainer, interview by author; Thompson, "New Work"; Catterson, "Dancing Yvonne."
24. See Coates, "Theorizing in Motion," 18.
25. See clip "All of Me—7. 'Private Conversation,'" accessed 1 October 2010, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g56frzoM4SQ>.
26. Interviews with Rainer and dancers cited in these footnotes confirmed Rainer's strictness about the dancers' precision when executing the appropriated movement. See also the account of Rainer's instruction in Bryan-Wilson, "Practicing *Trio A*."
27. See Catterson, "Dancing Yvonne"; Hoffbauer, interview by author; Patricia Hoffbauer, e-mail to author, 29 March 2011; Rainer, *Feelings Are Facts*, 464; Silvers, interview by author; Kaufman, "10 Questions"; Hills, *Henry Hills—SSS*, in which Silvers can be seen improvising on the Lower East Side; Coates, interview by author; Fromson, "Fight of a Dancing Thinker."
28. Reflecting on identity categories, Rainer has written about the queer potential for representation to be found in the cultural-sexual invisibility of postmenopausal women, particularly lesbians. Rainer, "Working Round the L-Word" (1991), in *A Woman Who*, 114.
29. I borrow the word *presentational* to describe Coates's style from Catterson, interview by author.
30. See Catterson, "Specialist Interviews."
31. According to Rainer, Coates performs ballet adagios, Catterson performs her mother's movement from the "mama phrase" again, and Silvers improvises. Rainer, interview by author.
32. On how Matisse felt he achieved his "musical harmony" in *The Dance*, see Henri Matisse, "Letter to Alexander Romm," October 1934, in *Matisse on Art*, 70. For a discussion of Matisse's "negative" engagement with the *decoratif* and his goal of "serenity through simplification of ideas and of form," see Wright, *Matisse and the Subject of Modernism*, 131–160, esp. 141.
33. See Cunningham, "Performance of *Suite for Five*."
34. Rainer, *Work*, 327. See discussion in chap. 1.
35. Owens, "Allegorical Impulse," 65.
36. Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 141. See Rainer's concordant reference to Butler in Rainer, "Where's the Passion? Where's the Politics?" 53.
37. Compare T. J. Clark writing about "what drives a painter like Poussin to bring the material reality of paint up to the surface": "In [painted-ness] and through it other identities . . . are bracketed and made to occur again . . . And for a moment we do not know how to react to them. . . . We enter into the identity in a new way: that's the hope." See Clark, *Sight of Death*, 127.
38. Stimson, "A Photograph Is Never Alone," 105.
39. Silvers, interview by author.
40. Rainer, interview by author; Silvers, interview by author.

This page intentionally left blank

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Acconci, Vito. "Adaptation Studies." In *Essaying Essays*, ed. Richard Kostelanetz, 190–95. New York: Out of London Press, 1975.
- . "Blindfolded Catching Piece." *Flash Art*, May 1971, cover.
- . "Contacts/Contexts (Frame of Reference): Ten Pages of Reading Roget's *Thesaurus*." *o to 9*, no. 6 (July 1969): 17–26.
- . "Drifts and Conversions." *Avalanche*, no. 2 (Winter 1971): 90–95.
- . *Hand and Mouth*. Illustration. In *Catalogue of Headlines and Images*. Amsterdam: Stadsdrukkerij Amsterdam, 1978.
- . "Hand and Mouth Piece." *Interfunktionen*, no. 5 (November 1970): 142.
- . Interview by Liza Béar. *Avalanche*, no. 6 (Fall 1972): 70–77.
- . "An Interview with Vito Acconci." By Cindy Nemser. *Arts Magazine* 45, no. 5 (March 1971): 20–23.
- . *Language to Cover a Page: The Early Writings of Vito Acconci*, ed. Craig Dworkin. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2006.
- . "Notebook: On Activity and Performance." *Art and Artists* 6, no. 2 (May 1971): 68–69.
- . "Notes from a Conversation Tape with Vito Acconci, July 22, 1971." Interview by David Rosenberg. *A Space News* (Toronto), July 1971.
- . "On-Going Activities and Situations." Notes to accompany an exhibition, March 27–April 24, 1971, John Gibson Gallery, New York, 1971. Vito Acconci Artist's File, Museum of Modern Art Library, New York.
- . "Public Space in a Private Time." *Critical Inquiry* 16, no. 4 (Summer 1990): 900–918.
- . "Reviews and Previews." *Artnews*, January 1969, 22.
- . "Reviews and Previews: Babe Schapiro." *Artnews*, October 1969, 22.
- . "Reviews and Previews: Ingeborg Glasser." *Artnews*, December 1968, 17.
- . "Reviews and Previews: Robert Craner." *Artnews*, November 1969, 17.
- . "Some Notes on Activity and Performance." *Interfunktionen*, no. 5 (November 1970): 138. Reprinted in *Vito Acconci: Writings, Works, Projects*, ed. Gloria Moure (Barcelona: Ediciones Polígrafa, 2001), 351.
- . "Vito Acconci." *Avalanche*, no. 6 (Fall 1972): 2ff.
- . "Vito Acconci." *Flash Art*, May–June 1972, 20.
- . *Vito Acconci: Diary of a Body, 1969–1973*. Milan: Charta, 2004.
- . *Vito Acconci: Photographic Works, 1969–1970*. New York: Brooke Alexander, 1988.
- . *Vito Acconci Talks to Louwrien Wijers*. Amsterdam: Jan Brand, Kantoor Voor Cultuur Extracten, 1979.
- . *Vito Acconci: Writings, Works, Projects*. Edited by Gloria Moure. Barcelona: Ediciones Polígrafa, 2001.
- . *Vito Hannibal Acconci Studio*. Barcelona: Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona, 2004.
- Acconci, Vito, and Bernadette Mayer, eds. *o To 9: The Complete Magazine, 1967–1969*. Brooklyn: Ugly Duckling Press, 2006.
- Acconci, Vito, and Yvonne Rainer. "Interview with Vito Acconci and Yvonne Rainer." By Christopher Wavelet. August 24, 2003. In *Acconci, Vito Hannibal Acconci Studio*.
- Adorno, Theodor. *Aesthetic Theory*. 1970. Translated by Robert Hullot-Kentor. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998.
- Aeschlimann, Roland, Maurice Berger, and Hendel Teicher. *Trisha Brown: Dance and Art in Dialogue, 1961–2001*. Andover, Mass.: Addison Gallery of American Art, Phillips Academy, 2004.
- Allen, Gwen. *Artists Magazines: An Alternative Space for Art*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2011.

- Allyn, David. *Make Love, Not War*. Boston: Little, Brown, 2000.
- Althusser, Louis. "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses." Translated by Ben Brewster. In *La Pensée* (1970). Reproduced on *The Marxist Internet Archive*. Accessed 8 June 2014. <https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/althusser/1970/ideology.htm>.
- Ames, Van Meter. "Is It Art?" *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 30, no. 1 (Autumn 1971): 39–48.
- Archias, Sarah Elise. "The Body as a Material in the Early Performance Work of Carolee Schneemann, Yvonne Rainer, and Vito Acconci." PhD diss., University of California, Berkeley, 2008.
- Ashton, Jennifer. *From Modernism to Postmodernism: American Poetry and Theory in the Twentieth Century*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 2005.
- Andre, Carl. Untitled statement. *Interfunktionen*, no. 5 (November 1970): back cover.
- . Untitled statement. *Interfunktionen*, no. 6 (September 1971): back cover.
- "The Avant-Garde of Presence." *Internationale Situationniste*, no. 8 (January 1963). Reprinted in Knabb, *Situationist International Anthology*, 109.
- Avgikos, Jan. "Carolee Schneemann, New Museum." *Artforum* 35 (March 1997): 94.
- Berger, Maurice. *Labyrinths: Robert Morris, Minimalism, and the 1960s*. New York: Harper and Row, 1989.
- Baker, Ella. "Bigger Than a Hamburger." *Southern Patriot*, May 1960. Reproduced on *Veterans of the Civil Rights Movement*. Accessed 31 July 2014. <http://www.crmvet.org/docs/sncc2>.
- Banes, Sally. Review of *The Object of Performance: The American Avant-Garde since 1970*, by Henry M. Sayre. *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 48, no. 1 (Winter 1990): 88.
- . *Democracy's Body: Judson Dance Theater, 1962–1964*. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1993.
- . *Greenwich Village 1963: Avant-garde Performance and the Effervescent Body*. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1993.
- . "Steve Paxton: Physical Things." *Dance Scope* 13 (Winter/Spring 1979): 11–25.
- . *Terpsichore in Sneakers: Postmodern Dance*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1979.
- Banes, Sally, Mikhail Baryshnikov, and Andrea Harris. *Reinventing Dance in the 1960s: Everything Was Possible*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2003.
- Barthes, Roland. *Camera Lucida*. Translated by Richard Howard. New York: Hill and Wang, 1981.
- Battcock, Gregory, ed. *Minimal Art: A Critical Anthology*. New York: E. P. Dutton, 1968. Reprinted, with an introduction by Anne M. Wagner, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995.
- . *The New Art*. New York: E. P. Dutton, 1966.
- Baum, Kelly. "The Sex of the Situationist International." *October* 126 (Fall 2008): 23–43.
- Beauvoir, Simone de. *The Second Sex*. 1949. Translated and edited by H. M. Parshley. New York: Penguin, 1983.
- Becker, Jürgen, and Wolf Vostell, eds. *Happenings: Fluxus, Pop Art, Nouveau Réalisme, eine Dokumentation*. Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1965.
- Brockway, Merrill, dir. *Beyond the Mainstream*. Produced by Merrill Brockway and Carl Charlson. WNET, New York, 1980. Videocassette. 60 minutes.
- Blocker, Jane. *What the Body Cost: Desire, History, and Performance*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004.
- Boadella, David, ed. *In the Wake of Reich*. London: Coventure, 1976.
- Boal, Iain, T. J. Clark, Joseph Mathews, Michael Watts, and Hal Foster. "An Exchange on Afflicted Powers: Capital and Spectacle in a New Age of War." *October* 115 (Winter 2006): 3–12.
- Bochner, Mel. "Sol LeWitt." *Arts Magazine* 40, no. 9 (September–October 1966): 61.
- Bowles, John P. *Adrian Piper: Race, Gender, and Embodiment*. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2011.
- Brown, Helen Gurley. *Sex and the Single Girl*. New York: B. Geis, 1962.
- Brown, Norman O. *Love's Body*. New York: Vintage Books, 1966.
- Brown, Trisha, Alex Hay, and Robert Rauschenberg. Interview by Sally Banes. "The Judson Project: Group Shoot: Trisha Brown, Alex Hay and Robert Rauschenberg." Bennington, Vt.: Judson Project (Bennington College), 1983. New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, Jerome Robbins Dance Division. Videocassette. 82 minutes.
- Brown, Wendy. *Politics Out of History*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2001.
- Bryan-Wilson, Julia. *Art Workers: Radical Practice in the Vietnam War Era*. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2009.
- . "Practicing 'Trio' A." *October* 140 (Spring 2012): 54–74.
- Buchloh, Benjamin, and Judith Rodenbeck. *Experiments in the Everyday: Allan Kaprow and*

- Robert Watts; *Events, Objects, Documents*. New York: Columbia University, Miriam and Ira Wallach Gallery, 1999.
- Buck-Morss, Susan. "What Is Political Art?" In *InSITE97: Private Time in Public Space*, edited by Sally Yard, 14–26. San Diego: Installation Gallery, 1998.
- Buck-Morss, Susan, and Grant Kester. "Aesthetics after the End of Art: An Interview with Susan Buck-Morss." *Art Journal* 56, no. 1 (Spring 1997): 38–45.
- Burt, Ramsay. *Judson Dance Theater: Performative Traces*. New York: Routledge, 2006.
- Burton, Scott. *Scott Burton: Collected Writings on Art and Performance, 1965–1975*. Edited by David Getsy. Chicago: Sobercove Press, 2012.
- Butler, Cornelia, and Lisa Gabriel Mark, eds. *WACK! Art and the Feminist Revolution*. Los Angeles: Museum of Contemporary Art, 2007.
- Butler, Judith. "Bodies and Power Revisited." In *Feminism and the Final Foucault*, edited by Diana Taylor and Karen Vintges. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2004.
- . *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of Sex*. New York: Routledge, 1993.
- . "Can One Lead a Good Life in a Bad Life?" Adorno Prize Lecture, September 11, 2012. Reproduced in *Radical Philosophy*, November–December 2012, and on *The European Graduate School*. Accessed 1 July 2014. <http://www.egs.edu/faculty/judith-butler/articles/can-one-lead-a-good-life-in-a-bad-life/>.
- . *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. New York: Routledge, 1990.
- . *The Judith Butler Reader*. Edited by Sara Salih with Judith Butler. Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 2004.
- . *The Psychic Life of Power: Theories in Subjection*. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1997.
- . "Vulnerability and Resistance Revisited." Lecture, Center for Gender and Women's Studies Trinity College, Dublin, Ireland, February 2015. Accessed 7 June 2015. <http://warscapes.com/blog/judith-butler-speaks-about-vulnerability-and-resistance>.
- Cage, John. "Fontana Mix: A Realization of the Version for Magnetic Tape Alone." *Electronic Music*. Turnabout/Vox Productions 4046, 1966.
- . *John Cage*. Catalogue portion organized by Robert Dunn. New York: Henmar Press, 1962.
- . *Silence*. 1961. Reprint, Hanover, N.H.: Wesleyan University Press, 1973.
- Cameron, Dan. "In the Flesh." In *Carolee Schneemann: Up to and Including Her Limits*. New York: New Museum of Contemporary Art, 1997.
- Capar. "En plein coeur de Paris une fête sexuelle où l'amour, c'est ça." *France-Soir*, 3 June 1964, n.p. Box 64, folder 1, "Clippings, 1962–64." Carolee Schneemann Papers. Getty Research Institute Special Collections.
- Carden, Maren Lockwood. *The New Feminist Movement*. New York: Russell Sage, 1974.
- Catterson, Pat. "Dancing Yvonne." *Attitude* 22, no. 3 (Fall 2008): 18–21.
- . Interview by the author. 28 March 2011.
- . "Specialist Interviews: Pat Catterson." ArtsWork, Herberger Institute for Art and Design, Arizona State University, 2003. Accessed 10 March 2011. http://artswork.asu.edu/ig2/specialist/o2_index.html.
- Chiong, Kathryn. "Nauman's Beckett Walk." *October* 86 (Autumn 1998): 63–81.
- Chomsky, Noam. Review of *Verbal Behavior*, by B. F. Skinner. *Language* 35 (1959): 26–58.
- Chong, Doryun. *Tokyo, 1955–1970: A New Avant-Garde*. New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2012.
- Clark, T. J. "Clement Greenberg's Theory of Art." *Critical Inquiry* 9, no. 6 (September 1982): 139–56.
- . *Farewell to an Idea: Episodes from a History of Modernism*. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2000.
- . *The Painting of Modern Life: Paris in the Art of Manet and His Followers*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1984.
- . "Phenomenality and Materiality in Cézanne." In *Materiality of Events: Paul De Man and the Afterlife of Theory*, edited by Tom Cohen, 93–113. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001.
- . "Pollock's Smallness." In *Jackson Pollock: New Approaches*, edited by Pepe Karmel and Kirk Varnedoe, 15–31. New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1999.
- . *The Sight of Death*. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2006.
- Certeau, Michel de. *The Practice of Everyday Life*. Translated by Steven Rendall. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984.
- Childs, Lucinda. Interview by Amanda Degener. "The Judson Project: Lucinda Childs." Bennington, Vt.: Judson Project (Bennington College), 1983. New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, Jerome Robbins Dance Division. Videocassette. 30 minutes.
- Coates, Emily. Interview by author, 9 October 2009.
- . "Theorizing in Motion: Points of Contact in International Dance at Yale." *Theater* 40, no. 1 (2010): 11–23.

- Corner, Philip. Interview by Sally Banes and Michael Rowe. "The Judson Project: Philip Corner." Bennington, Vt.: Judson Project (Bennington College), 1983. New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, Jerome Robbins Dance Division. Videocassette. 38 minutes.
- Copeland, Huey. *Bound to Appear: Art, Slavery, and the Site of Blackness in Multicultural America*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013.
- Copeland, Roger. "Cunningham, Collage, and the Computer." *Performing Arts Journal* 21, no. 3 (1999): 42–54.
- Crary, Jonathan. "Attention, Spectacle, Counter-Memory." *October* 50 (Autumn 1989): 96–107.
- Crow, Thomas. *The Rise of the Sixties*. New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1996.
- Cunningham, Merce. "Cunningham, *Variations V* (1965)." Dorkbot-Sea. Accessed 26 October 2006. <http://www.dorkbot.org/dorkbotsea/events-electricarts.shtml>.
- . "A Performance of *Suite for Five* at the Harris Theater, Columbia College, Chicago, IL." 2005. Merce Cunningham Dance Capsules. Accessed 22 July 2015. <http://dancecapsules.mercecunningham.org>.
- Curtis, Adam. *The Century of the Self*. Documentary film. BBC, 2002. DVD.
- Dance Research Journal* 41, no. 2 (Winter 2009). Special issue on Rainer's *Trio A*.
- D'Angelo, Raymond. *The American Civil Rights Movement: Readings and Interpretations*. Guilford, Conn.: McGraw-Hill/Dushkin, 2001.
- D'Emilio, John, and Estelle B. Freedman, eds. *Intimate Matters: A History of Sexuality in America*. 2nd ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997.
- Dasnières, Laure. "Yvonne Rainer Assisted Living Good Sports 2 and Spiraling Down au Centre Pompidou." 6 February 2011. Accessed 1 March 2011. <http://www.notfortourists-paris.com>.
- Darwin, Charles. *On the Expression of Emotions in Men and Animals*. 1872. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965.
- Debord, Guy. *Comments on the Society of the Spectacle*. 1988. Translated by Malcolm Imrie. London: Verso, 1998.
- . "Perspectives for Conscious Alterations of Everyday Life." 17 May 1961. Tape-recorded talk at a conference of the Group for Research on Everyday Life convened in Paris by Henri Lefebvre. *Internationale Situationniste*, August 1961. Reprinted in Knabb, *Situationist International Anthology*, ed. Ken Knabb. (Berkeley, Calif.: Bureau of Public Secrets, 1981), 90–99. Reproduced on Situationist International Online, accessed 4 May 2014, <http://www.cddc.vt.edu/sionline/si/everyday.html>.
- . *The Society of the Spectacle*. 1967. Translated by Donald Nicholson-Smith. London: Verso, 1994.
- Delany, Samuel R. *The Motion of Light in Water: Sex and Science Fiction Writing in the East Village, 1957–1965*. New York: William Morrow, 1988.
- Dine, Jim. *Jim Dine: Walking Memory, 1959–1969*. New York: Guggenheim Museum, 1999.
- Domingo, Willis. "New York Galleries." *Arts Magazine* 45, no. 7 (May 1971): 55–57.
- Drake, Ervin. "The Second Sexual Revolution." *Time* 83, no. 4 (24 January 1964): 54–59.
- Drucker, Johanna. "Experimental, Visual, and Concrete Poetry: A Note on Historical Context and Basic Concepts." In *Experimental, Visual, Concrete: Avant-garde Poetry since the 1960s*, edited by K. David Jackson, Eric Vos, and Johanna Drucker, 39–61. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1996.
- Duncan, Carol. "The MoMA's Hot Mamas." *Art Journal* 48, no. 2 (Summer 1989): 171–78.
- Duval Smith, Peter. "Happenings." *Financial Times* (London), 9 June 1964. Box 64, folder 1: "Clippings, 1962–64." Carolee Schneemann Papers. Getty Research Institute Special Collections.
- Duvignaud, Jean. "Pêle-mêle: La Chronique de Régine Deforges, Crazy Horse." *Journal l'humanité*. 23 May 2001. Accessed 20 November 2006. <http://www.humanite.fr>.
- Dworkin, Craig. "Fugitive Signs." *October* 95 (Winter 2001): 91–114.
- Edwards, Owen. "Courage at the Greensboro Lunch Counter." *Smithsonian Magazine*, February 2010. Accessed 24 August 2014. <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/arts-culture/courage-at-the-greensboro-lunch-counter-4507661/?no-ist>.
- Elliot, David, and Kazu Kaido, eds. *Reconstructions: Avant-Garde Art in Japan, 1945–1965*. Oxford: Museum of Modern Art Oxford, 1985.
- Fer, Briony. *The Infinite Line: Re-making Art after Modernism*. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2004.
- Feree, Myra Marx, and Beth B. Hess. *Controversy and Coalition: The New Feminist Movement*. Boston: Twayne, 1985.
- Ferrell, Elizabeth. "Everyday Action: Allan Kaprow's Environments as Participation Art." Paper presented at a seminar in the Department of History of Art, University of California, Berkeley, 2004.

- Fetterman, William. *John Cage's Theatre Pieces, Notations and Performances*. Amsterdam: Harwood, 1996.
- Firestone, Shulamith. *The Dialectics of Sex*. New York: William Morrow, 1970.
- Flynt, Henry. "The Important Significance of the Creep Personality." Manuscript, May 1962. Cited in "Flynt Cites Value of Social 'Creep,'" *Harvard Crimson*, 16 May 1962. On *Harvard Crimson* website, accessed 4 June 2014, <http://www.thecrimson.com/article/1962/5/16/flynt-cites-value-of-social-creep>.
- Forti, Simone. *Handbook in Motion*. Halifax: Press of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design; New York: New York University Press, 1974.
- . Interview by Meg Cottam. "The Judson Project: Simone Forti." Bennington, Vt.: Judson Project (Bennington College), 1983. New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, Jerome Robbins Dance Division. Videocassette. 45 minutes.
- Foster, Hal. "The Crux of Minimalism." In *The Return of the Real*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1996.
- Foster, Susan Leigh. "Choreographies of Protest." *Theatre Journal* 55, no. 3 (October 2003): 395–412.
- . *Reading Dancing: Bodies and Subjects in Contemporary American Dance*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986.
- Foucault, Michel. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. 1975. Translated by Alan Sheridan. New York: Vintage, 1979.
- . *The History of Sexuality*. Vol. 1: *An Introduction*. 1976. Translated by Robert Hurley. New York: Vintage, 1990.
- . *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*. 1961. Translated by Richard Howard. New York: Pantheon, 1965.
- . "Maurice Blanchot: The Thought from Outside." 1966. Translated by Brian Massumi. In *Foucault Blanchot*, 7–58. New York: Zone, 1987.
- . "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History." In *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow, 76–100. New York: Pantheon, 1984.
- . *Power*. Vol. 3 of *The Essential Works of Foucault, 1954–1984*. Edited by James D. Faubion. New York: New Press, 2001.
- Franko, Mark. *Dancing Modernism / Performing Politics*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995.
- Fried, Michael. "Three American Painters: Kenneth Noland, Jules Olitski, Frank Stella." 1965. In *Art and Objecthood: Essays and Reviews*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998.
- . "Art and Objecthood." *Artforum* 10 (Summer 1967): 12–23. Reprinted in Battcock, *Minimal Art*, 116–47.
- Friedman, Ken. "Fluxus and Company." In *The Fluxus Reader*, edited by Ken Friedman, 237–55. Chichester, West Sussex, England: John Wiley & Sons, 1998.
- Fromson, Daniel. "The Fight of a Dancing Thinker." *Yale Daily News*, 7 December 2007. Accessed 4 March 2011. <http://www.yaledailynews.com/news/2007/dec/07>.
- Frueh, Joanna. "The Body through Women's Eyes." In *The Power of Feminist Art: The American Movement of the 1970s, History and Impact*, edited by Norma Broude and Mary D. Garrard, 190–207. New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1994.
- Friedan, Betty. *The Feminine Mystique*. New York: W. W. Norton, 1963.
- Fuchs, Elinor. "Staging the Obscene Body." *TDR* 33, no. 1 (Spring 1989): 33–58.
- Fuss, Diana. *Essentially Speaking: Feminism, Nature, and Difference*. New York: Routledge, 1989.
- Gardiner, Michael E. *Critiques of Everyday Life*. New York: Routledge, 2000.
- Garrels, Gary. *Plane Image: A Brice Marden Retrospective*. New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2006.
- Gauter, Delphine. "Yvonne Rainer [Paris] Légende Vivante." 8 February 2011. Accessed 3 March 2011. Resmusica.com.
- Geduld, Victoria Phillips. "Dancing Diplomacy: Martha Graham and the Strange Commodity of Cold-War Cultural Exchange in Asia, 1955 and 1974." *Dance Chronicle* 33, no. 1 (2010): 44–81.
- Gilbard, Florence. "An Interview with Vito Acconci: Video Works, 1977–78." *Afterimage* 12, no. 4 (November 1984): 9–15.
- Glahn, Philip. "Brechtian Journeys: Yvonne Rainer's Film As Counterpublic Art." *Art Journal* 68, no. 2 (Summer 2009): 76–93.
- Goffmann, Erving. *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. New York: Doubleday Anchor, 1959.
- Goldberg, Roselee. *Performance: Live Art 1909 to the Present*. London: Thames and Hudson; New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1979.
- Goldstein, Ann. *A Minimal Future? Art as Object, 1958–1968*. Los Angeles: Museum of Contemporary Art, 2004.
- Govan, Michael. *Dan Flavin: A Retrospective*. New York: Dia Art Foundation, 2004.
- Graham, Martha. *Blood Memory*. London: Macmillan, 1991.

- . *A Dancers World*. Dances conceived and choreographed by Martha Graham. Directed and photographed by Peter Glushanok. Commentary by Martha Graham and LeRoy Leatherman. Produced by Nathan Kroll. Pittsburgh: WQED, 1957. Accessed 4 January 2015. youtube.com.
- . "I Am a Dancer." 1952. In *The Routledge Dance Studies Reader*, edited by Alexandra Carter, 66. New York: Routledge, 1998.
- . "Martha Graham Is Interviewed by Pierre Tugal." *Dancing Times*, October 1950, 22.
- . *Martha Graham Dance Company*. Produced by Emile Ardolino; directed by Merrill Brockway; choreography reconceived for television by Martha Graham. WNET, New York, April 7, 1976. Videocassette. 90 minutes.
- Graham Technique Class*. Filmed by Helen Priest Rogers. WMI Gymnasium at Connecticut College School of Dance, August 12 and 13, 1957. Motion picture.
- Greenberg, Clement. "American-Type Painting." In Greenberg, *Collected Essays*, 3:217–36. Originally published in *Partisan Review*, Spring 1955.
- . *Art and Culture: Critical Essays*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1961.
- . "Cézanne and the Unity of Modern Art." In Greenberg, *Collected Essays*, 3:82–91. Originally published in *Partisan Review*, May–June 1951.
- . *Clement Greenberg: The Collected Essays and Criticism*. 4 vols. Edited by John O'Brian. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986.
- . "Jackson Pollock: Inspiration, Vision, Intuitive Decision." *Vogue*, April 1967. Reprinted in Greenberg, *Collected Essays*, 4:245–50.
- . "The Jackson Pollock Market Soars." In Greenberg, *Collected Essays*, 4:107–114. Originally published in *New York Times*, 16 April 1961.
- . "The Present Prospects of American Painting and Sculpture." *Horizon*, October 1947, 20–30. Reprinted in Greenberg, *Collected Essays*, 2:160–70.
- . "Recentness of Sculpture." In Battcock, *Minimal Art*, 180–86. Originally published in *American Sculpture of the Sixties* (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1967).
- . "Review of an Exhibition of Willem de Kooning." In Greenberg, *Collected Essays*, 2:228–30. Originally published in *Nation*, 24 April 1948.
- Gross, Sally. Interview by the author. Spring 2004.
- Grosz, Elizabeth. *Becoming Undone: Darwinian Reflections on Life, Politics, and Art*. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2011.
- . *Volatile Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Feminism*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994.
- Guilbaut, Serge. *How New York Stole the Idea of Modern Art*. Translated by Arthur Goldhammer. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983.
- Halprin, Anna. Interview by author, 1 April 2008.
- . "Yvonne Rainer Interviews Ann Halprin." *Tulane Drama Review* 10, no. 2 (Winter 1965): 142–67.
- Halprin, Anna, and Rachel Kaplan. *Moving toward Life: Five Decades of Transformational Dance*. Hanover, N.H.: Wesleyan University Press, 1995.
- Harrison, Charles. "Conceptual Art: The Aesthetic and the End(s) of art." In *Themes in Contemporary Art*, edited by Gillian Perry and Paul Wood, 45–87. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2004.
- Harrison, Charles, and Paul Wood. *Art in Theory, 1900–1990*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1992.
- Hay, Deborah. Interview by Sally Baner. On "The Judson Project: Al Carmines and Deborah Hay." Bennington, Vt.: Judson Project (Bennington College), 1983. New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, Jerome Robbins Dance Division. Videocassette. 53 minutes.
- Hefner, Hugh. *The Playboy Philosophy*. Chicago: HMH, 1963.
- Hegyí, Lorand, and Dieter Schrage. *Jean-Jacques Lebel: Bilder, Skulpturen, Installationen*. Vienna: Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig Wien, 1998.
- Hesse, Eva. "An Interview with Eva Hesse." By Cindy Nemser. *Artforum* 8, no. 9 (May 1970): 59–63.
- Hills, Henry. *Henry Hills—SSS*. 1988. Film. Accessed 2 March 2011. <http://www.youtube.com>.
- Higgins, Hannah. *Fluxus Experience*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002.
- Highmore, Ben. *Everyday Life and Cultural Theory: An Introduction*. New York: Routledge, 2002.
- Hoffbauer, Patricia. Interview by author, 1 March 2011.
- Jackson, Shelley. "Shelley Jackson Talks with Vito Acconci." *Believer*, December 2006/January 2007, 2. Accessed 14 October 2012. <http://www.believermag.com>.
- Jakobson, Roman. "Shifters, Verbal Categories, and the Russian Verb." In *Selected Writings*, vol. 2, *Word and Language*, 130–147. The Hague: Mouton, 1971.
- Johns, Jasper. *Jasper Johns*. Exhibition organized by Alan R. Solomon. New York: Jewish Museum, 1964.
- . "Sketchbook Notes." *Art and Literature*, no. 4 (Spring 1965): 185–92.
- . "Sketchbook Notes," *o to 9*, no. 6 (July 1969): 1–2.
- Johnston, Jill. "Dance." *Village Voice*, 26 November 1964, 13.

- . "Dance: Yvonne Rainer II." *Village Voice*, 6 June 1963, 11, 18.
- . "From Lovely Confusion to Naked Breakfast." *Village Voice*, 18 July 1963, 12.
- . "Judson Concerts #3, #4." *Village Voice*, 28 February 1963, 9, 19.
- . *Lesbian Nation*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1973.
- . *Marmalade Me*. New York: E. P. Dutton, 1971.
- . "Modern Dance." In *The New American Arts*, edited by Richard Kostelanetz. New York: Horizon, 1965.
- . "The New American Modern Dance." *Art and Literature*, no. 5 (Summer 1965): 118–33.
- Jones, Alan. "Profile of a Dealer." *Express* (New York), Spring 1983, 4.
- Jones, Amelia. *Body Art / Performing the Subject*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998.
- . "'Clothes Make the Man': The Male Artist as Performative Function." *Oxford Art Journal*, 18, no. 2 (1995): 18–32.
- , ed. *Performing the Body / Performing the Text*. New York: Routledge, 1999.
- . "Presence in Absentia: Experiencing Performance as Documentation." *Art Journal* 56, no. 4 (Winter 1997): 11–18.
- Joseph, Brandon W. *Random Order: Robert Rauschenberg and the Neo-Avant-Garde*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2003.
- . "'A Therapeutic Value for City Dwellers': The Development of John Cage's Early Avant-Garde Aesthetic Position." In *John Cage: Music, Philosophy, and Intention, 1933–1950*, ed. David W. Patterson, 135–75. New York: Routledge, 2002.
- Jowitt, Deborah. "Expression and Expressionism in American Modern Dance." In *Dance History: An Introduction*, edited by Janet Adshead-Lansdale and June Layson, 169–81. New York: Routledge, 1994.
- Judd, Donald. *Complete Writings, 1959–1975*. New York: New York University Press, 1975.
- . "Specific Objects." *Arts Yearbook* 8 (1965): 74–82. Accessed 27 July 2015. <http://www.juddfoundation.org>.
- K., R. "Happenings, Orgies à l'orgeat." *Paris Express*, 4 June 1964, page number not included on clipping. Box 64, folder 1: "Clippings, 1962–64." Carolee Schneemann Papers. Getty Research Institute Special Collections.
- Kahn, Douglas. "Let Me Hear My Body Talk, My Body Talk." In *Re:Live: Performance in Media Art Histories*, edited by Sean Cubitt and Paul Thomas, 235–56. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2013.
- . *Noise, Water, Meat: A History of Sound in the Arts*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1999.
- Kalb, Jonathan. *Beckett in Performance*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1989.
- Kaprow, Allan. *Assemblage, Environments, Happenings*. New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1966.
- . *Essays on the Blurring of Art and Life*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993.
- . "The Legacy of Jackson Pollock." In Kaprow, *Essays on the Blurring of Art and Life*, 1–9. Originally published in *Artnews* 57 (October 1958): 26–28, 55–57.
- . "Paper." In *Untitled Essays and Other Works*. New York: A Great Bear Pamphlet, Something Else Press, 1967. Ubuweb: Historical, Allan Kaprow. Accessed 12 March 2008. <http://www.ubu.com/historical/kaprow/index.html>.
- . "The Real Experiment." *Artforum* 22 (December 1983): 37–43.
- Karmel, Pepe. "Pollock at Work: The Films and Photographs of Hans Namuth." In *Jackson Pollock*, by Kirk Varnedoe with Pepe Karmel, 87–137. New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1998.
- , ed. *Jackson Pollock Interviews, Articles, and Reviews*. New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1999.
- Karmel, Pepe and Kirk Varnedoe, eds. *Jackson Pollock: New Approaches*. New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1999.
- Kaufman, Erica. "10 Questions for Bruce Andrews and Sally Silvers." *Poetry Project Blog*, 9 February 2010. Accessed 2 March 2011. <http://poetryproject.org/project-blog/10-questions-for-bruce-and-sally-silvers>.
- Kee, Joan. "Situating a Singular Kind of 'Action': Early Gutai Painting, 1954–57." *Oxford Art Journal* 26, no. 2 (2003): 123–40.
- Kelsey, Robin. *Photography and the Art of Chance*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2015.
- Kinsey, Alfred, Wardell Pomeroy, and Clyde Martin. *Sexual Behavior in the Human Female*. Philadelphia: W. B. Saunders, 1953.
- Kinsey, Alfred, Wardell Pomeroy, Clyde Martin, and Paul Gebhard. *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male*. Philadelphia: W. B. Saunders, 1948.
- Kirby, Michael. *Happenings: An Illustrated Anthology*. New York: E. P. Dutton, 1965.
- . "The New Theatre." *Tulane Drama Review* 10, no. 2 (Winter 1965): 23–43.
- Klopfer, Peter. "Konrad Lorenz and the National Socialists: On the Politics of Ethology." *International Journal of Comparative Psychology* 7, no. 4 (1994): 202–8.

- Knabb, Ken, ed. *Situationist International Anthology*. Berkeley, Calif.: Bureau of Public Secrets, 1981.
- Koedt, Anne, Ellen Levine, and Anita Rapone, eds. *Radical Feminism*. New York: Quadrangle, 1973.
- Koestler, Arthur. *A Ghost in the Machine*. London: Hutchinson, 1967.
- . "Man, One of Evolution's Mistakes?" *New York Times*, 19 October 1969.
- Kontova, Helena. "The Unconscious History: Interview with Roselee Goldberg," *Flash Art* 6 (1979): 30–36.
- Kostelanetz, Richard, ed. *John Cage*. New York: Praeger, 1970. Reprint, New York: Da Capo Press, 1991.
- . *The New American Arts*. New York: Horizon, 1965.
- Kotz, Liz. *Words to Be Looked At: Language in 1960s Art*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2007.
- Krauss, Rosalind. "The Cultural Logic of the Late Capitalist Museum," *October* 54 (Autumn 1990): 8–14.
- . "The Mind/Body Problem: Robert Morris in Series." In *Robert Morris: The Mind/Body Problem*, 2–17. New York: Guggenheim Foundation, 1994.
- . *The Optical Unconscious*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1993, 1994.
- . *Passages in Modern Sculpture*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1981.
- . "Video: The Aesthetics of Narcissism." *October* 1 (Spring 1976): 50–64.
- Kromm, Jane E. "The Feminization of Madness in Visual Representation." *Feminist Studies* 20, no. 3 (Autumn 1994): 507–35.
- Lambert, Carrie. "Moving Still: Mediating Yvonne Rainer's *Trio A*." *October* 89 (Summer 1999): 87–112.
- . "Yvonne Rainer's Media: Performance and the Image, 1961–73." PhD diss., Stanford University, 2002.
- Lambert-Beatty, Carrie. *Being Watched: Yvonne Rainer and the 1960s*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2008.
- . "More or Less Minimalism: Six Notes on Performance and Visual Art in the 1960s." In Ann Goldstein, *A Minimal Future? Art as Object 1958–1968*, 103–10. Los Angeles: Museum of Contemporary Art, 2004.
- . "Other Solutions." *Art Journal* 63, no. 3 (Autumn 2004): 48–61.
- Lebel, Jean-Jacques. *Le Happening*. Paris: Les Lettres Nouvelles, 1966.
- . *Jean Jacques Lebel: Retour d'exil; Peintures, dessins, collages, 1954–1988*. Paris: Gallery 1900–2000, 1988.
- . *La Poesie de la Beat Generation*. Paris: Denoël, 1965.
- Lefebvre, Henri. *The Critique of Everyday Life*. 1947–1981. Translated by John Moore. London: Verso, 1991–2003.
- . "The Everyday and Everydayness." Translated by Christine Levich. *Yale French Studies*, no. 73 (1987): 7–11.
- . *Introduction to Modernity*. 1962. Translated by John Moore. London: Verso, 1995.
- Lefebvre, Henri, and Kristin Ross. "Lefebvre on the Situationists: An Interview." *October* 79 (Winter 1997): 69–83.
- Leja, Michael. *Reframing Abstract Expressionism: Subjectivity and Painting in the 1940s*. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1993.
- Lee, Pamela M. *Chronophobia: On Time in the Art of the 1960s*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2004.
- Leslie, Esther. "Art and Revolution." Presentation at the conference "Marxism 2011," London. Video. 57 minutes. Accessed 10 November 2012. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3AJppzZZFpY>.
- Lewin, Kurt. *Principles of Topological Psychology*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1966.
- LeWitt, Sol. "Paragraphs on Conceptual Art." *Artforum* 5, no. 10 (Summer 1967): 79–83.
- . "Sentences on Conceptual Art." *o to 9*, no. 5 (January 1969): 4.
- . *Sol LeWitt*. Edited by Alicia Legg. New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1978.
- Lifshitz, Mikhail. *The Philosophy of Art of Karl Marx*. 1938. Translated by Ralph B. Winn. London: Pluto Press, 1973.
- Linker, Kate. *Vito Acconci*. New York: Rizzoli, 1994.
- Lippard, Lucy R. "New York Letter." *Art International* 9, no. 2 (March 1965): 46.
- . "The Pains and Pleasures of Rebirth: Women's Body Art." *Art in America* 64, no. 3 (May/June 1976): 73–81.
- . "Quite Contrary: Body, Nature, Ritual in Women's Art." *Chrysalis* 2 (1977): 31–47.
- . *Six Years: The Dematerialization of the Art Object*. New York: Praeger, 1973.
- Lorenz, Konrad. *Evolution and Modification of Behavior*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965.
- . *On Aggression*. 1966. Translated by Marjorie Kerr Wilson. New York: Bantam, 1969.
- . "Autobiography." In *Les Prix Nobel en 1973*, edited by Wilhelm Odelberg. Stockholm: Nobel Foundation, 1974. Reproduced on Nobelprize.org: The Official Website of the Nobel Prize. Accessed 1 June 2013. http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/medicine/laureates/1973/lorenz-autobio.html#.

- Lowen, Alexander. *Love and Orgasm*. New York: Macmillan, 1965.
- M., A.I. "Reviews and Previews: Allan Kaprow." *Artnews* 58 (November 1959): 14.
- MacDonald, Scott. "Interview with Hollis Frampton: The Early Years." *October* 12 (Spring 1980): 103–26.
- MacLow, Jackson. Interview by Michael Rowe. "The Judson Project: Jackson MacLow." Bennington, Vt.: Judson Project (Bennington College), 1983. New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, Jerome Robbins Dance Division. Videocassette. 48 minutes.
- MacNiell, Allan. "Darwin on Instincts and the Expression of Emotions." *Evolutionary Psychology*. Accessed 28 July 2012. <http://evolpsychology.blogspot.com/2009/03/summary-in-chapter-vii-of-origin-of.html>.
- Marcuse, Herbert. "Art as a Form of Reality." In *On the Future of Art*, edited by Edward Fry, 123–34. New York: Viking Press, 1970.
- . *Eros and Civilization: A Philosophical Inquiry into Freud*. 1955. Boston: Beacon, 1966.
- . *One-Dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Capitalist Society*. Boston: Beacon, 1964.
- Marks, Marcia. "Dance Works by Yvonne Rainer and Fred Herko." *Dance Magazine*, April 1962, 54.
- . "Phyllis Lamhut, Yvonne Rainer, William Davis, Albert Reid." *Dance Magazine*, April 1963, 20–21.
- Marter, Joan M., and Simon Anderson, eds. *Off Limits: Rutgers University and the Avant-Garde, 1957–1963*. Newark, N.J.: Newark Museum; New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1999.
- Martin, John. "Dance: Graham." *New York Times*, 6 April 1958.
- . "Graham Dances 'Cave of the Heart,' Revival Is Based on a Greek Legend." *New York Times*, 6 April 1958.
- Marx, Karl. *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*. Translated by Martin Milligan. Buffalo, N.Y.: Prometheus, 1987.
- . "Theses on Feuerbach." 1845. In *The Portable Karl Marx*, translated and edited by Eugene Kamenka, 155–58. New York: Penguin, 1983.
- . *The German Ideology*. 1845. Translated by Richard Dixon. Vol. 5 of Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*. New York: International, 1975. Accessed 5 October 2011. Marxists Internet Archive, <http://www.marxists.org>.
- . "From the Albums of Poems Dedicated to Jenny Von Westphalen." 1836. Translated by Alex Miller. In *Collected Works*, by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, 1:517–30. New York: International, 1975.
- Matisse, Henri. *Matisse on Art*. Edited by Jack Flam. New York: E. P. Dutton, 1973.
- McClure, Michael. *The New Book / A Book of Torture*. New York: Grove Press, 1961.
- . *Meat Science Essays*. San Francisco: City Lights, 1966.
- McDonagh, Don. *The Rise and Fall and Rise of Modern Dance*. Chicago: Chicago Review Press, 1990.
- McDonough, Tom. "The Crimes of the Flaneur." *October* 102 (Fall 2002): 101–22.
- McGuire, Mary. "Building a Social Frame: The Judson Memorial Church and the New American Avant-Garde, 1958–1965." Paper presented at New Institutions, 5th Annual Visual Art Graduate Student Conference, UC San Diego, 12 April 2012.
- McLuhan, Marshall. *The Medium Is the Massage: An Inventory of Effects*. New York: Random House, 1967.
- . *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964.
- McShine, Kynaston. *Information*. New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1970.
- Meltzer, Eve. "The Dream of the Information World." *Oxford Art Journal* 29, no. 1 (2006): 115–35.
- . *Systems We Have Loved: Conceptual Art, Affect, and the Antihumanist Turn*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013.
- Merleau-Ponty, Maurice. *Phenomenology of Perception*. 1945. Translated by Colin Smith. London: Routledge, 1962.
- Meyer, James. *Minimalism: Art and Polemics in the Sixties*. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2001.
- Meyer, Leonard B. "End of the Renaissance?" *Hudson Review*, Summer 1963, 169–86.
- Meyer-Hermann, Eva, Andrew Perchuk, and Lisa Rosenthal, eds. *Allan Kaprow: Art as Life*. Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2008.
- Michelson, Annette, Richard Serra, and Clara Weyergraf. "The Films of Richard Serra: An Interview." *October* 10 (Fall 1979): 69–164.
- Miller, Dorothy C., ed. *15 Americans*. New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1952.
- Miller, M. H. "Clock Stopper: Paula Cooper Opened the First Art Gallery in SoHo and Hasn't Slowed Down Since." *Observer*, 13 September 2011. Accessed 19 July 2015. observer.com/2011/09.
- Moore, Lillian. "Yvonne Rainer, Fred Herko Present Dance Offerings." *New York Herald Tribune*, 6 March 1962, no page number on clipping. From Rainer clippings file, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, Jerome Robbins Dance Division.

- Moore, Thurston. "o to 9 and Back Again, an Interview with Thurston Moore." In Acconci, Vito *Hannibal Acconci Studio*, 72–87.
- Morgan, Robert, ed. *Bruce Nauman*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002.
- Morris, Robert. "Dance." *Village Voice*, 3 February 1966, 8.
- . "Notes on Sculpture, Parts I and II." In Battcock, *Minimal Art*, 222–35. "Notes on Sculpture, Part I" first published in *Artforum* 4, no. 6 (February 1966): 42–44. "Notes on Sculpture, Part II" first published in *Artforum* 5, no. 2 (October 1966): 20–23.
- Moses, Omri. "Fitful Character: The Ethics of Improvisation in Modernist Writing." PhD diss., University of California, Berkeley, 2005.
- . "Jackson Pollock's Address to the Nonhuman." *Oxford Art Journal* 27, no. 1 (2004): 1–22.
- Moure, Gloria, ed. *Behind the Facts: Interfunktionen, 1968–1975*. Barcelona: Polígrafa, 2004.
- Murphy, Jay. "Assimilating the Unassimilable." *Parkett* 50, no. 51 (1997): 224–39.
- Nemser, Cindy. "Subject-Object Body Art." *Arts Magazine* 46, no. 1 (September–October 1971): 38–42.
- Nisbet, James. *Ecologies, Environments, and Energy Systems in the Art of the 1960s and 1970s*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2014.
- Nyman, Michael. "Cage and Satie." *Musical Times* 114, no. 1570 (December 1973): 1229.
- O'Dell, Kathy. *Contract with the Skin: Masochism, Performance Art, and the 1970's*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998.
- Oksala, Johanna. "Anarchic Bodies: Foucault and the Feminist Question of Experience." *Hypatia* 19, no. 4 (Autumn 2004): 99–121.
- O'Neill, William O. *Coming Apart: An Informal History of America in the 1960s*. New York: Quadrangle, 1971.
- Ortner, Sherry B. "Is Female to Male as Nature Is to Culture?" In *Woman, Culture, and Society*, edited by Michelle Zimbalist Rosaldo and Louise Lamphere, 67–87. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1974.
- Owens, Craig. "The Allegorical Impulse: Toward a Theory of Postmodernism, Part 2." *October* 13 (Summer 1980): 58–80.
- P., J. "Yvonne Rainer at the Commonwealth Institute." *Dance and Dancers*, November 1965, 45–46.
- Paxton, Steve. Interview by Nancy Stark Smith. "The Judson Project: Steve Paxton." Bennington, Vt.: Judson Project (Bennington College), 1983. New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, Jerome Robbins Dance Division. Videocassette. 59 minutes.
- . "Trance Script: Judson Project Interview with Steve Paxton (1980)." Interview by Nancy Stark Smith. *Contact Quarterly* (Winter 1989): 18.
- . *Speaking of Dance: Steve Paxton*. Produced and directed by Douglas Rosenberg. American Dance Festival Video, 1996. Videocassette. 78 minutes.
- Perloff, Marjorie. "'Transparent Selves': The Poetry of John Ashbery and Frank O'Hara." *The Yearbook of English Studies* 8, American Literature special number (1978): 171–196.
- . "Pound/Stevens: Whose Era?" *New Literary History* 13, no. 3 (Spring 1982): 485–514.
- Perreault, John. "Minimal Abstracts." Reprinted in Battcock, *Minimal Art*, 260–62. First published in *Arts Magazine* 41, no. 5 (March 1967).
- . "Cockroach Art." *Village Voice*, 8 April 1971, 23.
- Phelan, Peggy. *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance*. New York: Routledge, 1993.
- , ed. *Live Art in LA: Performance in Southern California, 1970–1983*. New York: Routledge, 2012.
- Pierce, Charles Sanders. "Evolutionary Love." 1893. In *Philosophical Writings of Pierce*, edited by Justus Buchler, 363ff. New York: Dover, 1955.
- Pietikainen, Petteri. "Utopianism in Psychology: The Case of Wilhelm Reich." *Journal of History of the Behavioral Sciences* 38, no. 2 (Spring 2002): 157–75.
- Pincus-Witten, Robert. "Vito Acconci and the Conceptual Performance." *Artforum* 10, no. 8 (April 1972): 47–49. Reprinted in Pincus-Witten, *Postminimalism* (New York: Out of London Press, 1977), 143–147.
- Piper, Adrian. *Out of Order, Out of Sight: Selected Writings in Meta-Art, 1968–1992*. 2 vols. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1996.
- . *Streetwork Streettracks I–II* (excerpt). 1969. Adrian Piper Research Archive Foundation Berlin website. Accessed 12 June 2013. http://www.adrianpiper.com/vs/sound_streetwork.shtml.
- Place, U. T. "Is Consciousness a Brain Process?" In *Identifying the Mind: Selected Papers of U. T. Place*, 45–52. New York: Oxford University Press, 2004.
- Porter, Fairfield. "Art." *Nation*, 24 October 1959. Reproduced in Meyer-Hermann, Perchuk, and Rosenthal, *Allan Kaprow*, illustration no. 50.
- Poseq, Avigdor W. G. "The Hanging Carcass Motif and Jewish Artists." *Jewish Art* (Jerusalem) 16–17 (1990): 139–56.
- Potts, Alex. "Autonomy in Post-War Art, Quasi-Heroic and Casual." *Oxford Art Journal* 27, no. 1 (2004): 43–59.

- . *Experiments in Modern Realism: World Making in Postwar European and American Art*. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2013.
- . "The Interrogation of Medium in Art of the 1960s." *Art History* 27, no. 2 (April 2004): 282–304.
- . "Writing the Happening: The Aesthetics of Nonart." In Meyer-Hermann, Perchuk, and Rosenthal, *Allan Kaprow*, 21–31.
- Pound, Ezra. *The Letters of Ezra Pound, 1907–41*. Edited by D. D. Paige. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1950.
- . *Literary Essays of Ezra Pound*. Edited by T. S. Eliot. New York: New Directions, 1954.
- Princenthal, Nancy. "The Arrogance of Pleasure." *Art in America* 85 (October 1997): 106–9.
- Provine, W. B. *Sewall Wright and Evolutionary Biology*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986.
- Rainer, Yvonne. "Backwater Twosome / Paxton and Moss." *Dance Scope* 13 (Winter/Spring 1979): 8–10. Originally published as "Paxton Untitled," *SoHo Weekly News*, 16 November 1978, 31.
- . "Don't Give the Game Away." *Arts Magazine* 41, no. 6 (April 1967): 44–47.
- . *The Films of Yvonne Rainer*. Contributions by B. Ruby Rich, Bérénice Reynaud, Mitchell Rosenbaum, and Patricia White. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989.
- . *Feelings Are Facts: A Life*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2006.
- . "A Fond Memoir with Sundry Reflections on a Friend and Her Art." October 11, 2001. In Aeschlimann, Berger, and Teicher, *Trisha Brown*, 47–53.
- . Interview by author, 14 December 2009.
- . Interview by Wendy Perron. "The Judson Project: Yvonne Rainer." Bennington, Vt.: Judson Project (Bennington College), 1983. New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, Jerome Robbins Dance Division. Videocassette. 56 minutes.
- . "Interview: Yvonne Rainer, Dancer and Filmmaker." *Scotsman*, 5 October 2010. Accessed 7 August 2014. <http://www.scotsman.com/news/interview-yvonne-rainer-dancer-and-filmmaker-1-478485>.
- . "Notes on Two Dances by Deborah Hay." *Ikon* 1, no. 1 (February 1967): 2–3.
- . "The Performer as a Persona: An Interview with Yvonne Rainer." By Liza Béar and Willoughby Sharp. *Avalanche*, no. 5 (Summer 1972): 46–59.
- . "A Quasi Survey of Some 'Minimalist' Tendencies in the Quantitatively Minimal Dance Activity Midst the Plethora, or an Analysis of Trio A." In *Work*, 63–69. Originally published in Battcock, *Minimal Art*, 263–73.
- . "Skirting and Aging: An Aging Artist's Memoir." In Sachs, *Yvonne Rainer*, 87–97.
- . "Where's the Passion?" Lecture, Bartos Theater, MIT, Cambridge, 12 April 2010. Accessed November 2010. <http://techtv.mit.edu/videos/6459-yvonne-rainer>.
- . "Where's the Passion? Where's the Politics?" *Theater* 40, no. 1 (2010): 46–55.
- . *A Woman Who . . . Essays, Interviews, Scripts*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999.
- . *Work, 1961–73*. Halifax, N.S.: Press of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design; New York: New York University Press, 1974.
- Ratcliff, Carter. "Reviews and Previews: Vito Hannibal Acconci." *Artnews*, March 1970, 10.
- Reich, Wilhelm. *The Function of the Orgasm*. 1927. Translated by Theodore P. Wolf. New York: Farrar, Straus, & Giroux, 1971.
- . *The Mass Psychology of Fascism*. 1933. Translated by Vincent R. Carfagno. New York: Farrar, Strauss, and Giroux, 1970.
- . *Selected Writings: An Introduction to Orgonomy*. New York: Farrar, Straus, and Cudahy, 1951.
- . *The Sexual Revolution: Toward a Self-Governing Character Structure*. 1936. Translated by Theodore P. Wolfe. New York: Farrar, Strauss, and Giroux, 1969.
- Relyea, Lane. *Your Everyday Art World*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2013.
- Robertson, Nan. "A Hall of Issues Opens in 'Village.'" *New York Times*, 4 December 1961.
- Robinson, Paul A. *The Freudian Left*. New York: Harper & Row, 1969.
- Rodenbeck, Judith. "Crash: Happenings (as) the Black Box of Experience, 1958–1966." PhD diss., Columbia University, 2003.
- . "Madness and Method: Before Theatricality," *Grey Room* 13 (Fall 2003): 54–79.
- . *Radical Prototypes: Allan Kaprow and the Invention of Happenings*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2011.
- Rose, Barbara. "ABC Art." *Art in America* 53, no. 5 (October–November 1965): 57–69. Reprinted in Battcock, *Minimal Art*, 274–79.
- Rose, Michael R., and George V. Lauder, eds. *Adaptation*. San Diego, Calif.: Academic Press, 1996.
- Rosenberg, Harold. "The American Action Painters." *Artnews* (December 1952): 22ff. Reprinted in *The Tradition of the New* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1962), 23–39.

- Rosenthal, Nan. "Assisted Levitation: The Art of Yves Klein." In *Yves Klein, 1928–1962: A Retrospective*, 89–135. Houston: Institute for the Arts, Rice University, 1982.
- Rothfuss, Joan, and Elizabeth Armstrong, eds. *In the Spirit of Fluxus*. Minneapolis: Walker Art Center, 1993.
- Ross, Janice. *Anna Halprin: Experience as Dance*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007.
- Sachs, Sid. *Yvonne Rainer: Radical Juxtapositions, 1961–2002*. Philadelphia: University of the Arts, 2002.
- Sadler, Simon. *The Situationist City*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1998.
- Sandler, Irving. *Al Held*. New York: Hudson Hills, 1984.
- Sass, Louis A. *Madness and Modernism*. New York: Basic, 1992.
- Sayre, Henry M. *The Object of Performance: The American Avant-Garde since 1970*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989.
- Scarry, Elaine. *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1985.
- Simmel, Paul, and Kristine Stiles, eds. *Out of Actions: Between Performance and the Object, 1949–1979*. Los Angeles: Museum of Contemporary Art, 1998.
- Schneemann, Carolee. "Carolee Schneemann: More Than Meat Joy." Interview by Robert Coe, March 1979. *Performance Art* 1 (1979): 8–15.
- . *Carolee Schneemann: Up to and Including Her Limits*. New York: New Museum of Contemporary Art, 1997.
- . *Correspondence Course: An Epistolary History of Carolee Schneemann and Her Circle*. Edited by Kristine Stiles. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2010.
- . *Imaging Her Erotics: Essays, Interviews, Projects*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2002.
- . *More Than Meat Joy*. New Paltz, N.Y.: Documentext, 1979.
- . "The Obscene Body/Politic." *Art Journal* 50 (Winter 1991): 28–35.
- Schneider, Rebecca. *The Explicit Body in Performance*. New York: Routledge, 1997.
- Seitz, William C. "The Realism and Poetry of Assemblage." In *The Art of Assemblage*. New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1961, 81–92.
- Seckler, Dorothy Gees. "The Audience Is His Medium!" *Art in America* 51, no. 2 (February 1963): 66.
- Sedgwick, Eve Kosofsky. "Paranoid Reading and Reparative Reading; or, You're So Paranoid, You Probably Think This Introduction Is About You." In *Novel Gazing: Queer Readings in Fiction*, edited by Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, 1–37. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1997.
- Selye, Hans. *The Stress of Life*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1956.
- Serra, Richard. *Writings/Interviews*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994.
- Shannon, Joshua. "Black Market: Materiality, Abstraction, and the Built Environment in the New York Avant-Garde, 1958–1962." PhD diss., University of California, Berkeley, 2003.
- . *The Disappearance of Objects*. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2009.
- Silverman, Kaja. *Flesh of My Flesh*. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2009.
- . *The Subject of Semiotics*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1983.
- Silvers, Sally. Interview by author, 1 March 2011.
- Simmel, Georg. "The Metropolis and Mental Life." 1902–3. In *The Sociology of Georg Simmel*, edited by Kurt H. Wolff, 409–24. Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1950.
- Simpson, David. "Pound's Wordsworth; or, Growth of a Poet's Mind." *ELH: English Literary History* 45, no. 4 (Winter 1978): 660–86.
- Skerl, Jennie, ed. *Reconstructing the Beats*. New York: Pelgrave-Macmillan, 2004.
- Smith, Michael. "Theatre: Meat Joy." *Village Voice*, 26 November 1964, 25.
- Solomon, Alan. "The New Art." *Popular Image*, 1963. Reprinted in Battcock, *The New Art*, 71–72.
- Solt, Mary Ellen. *Concrete Poetry: A World View*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1968.
- Sontag, Susan. "Happenings: An Art of Radical Juxtaposition." In *Against Interpretation*, 263–74. New York: Octagon, 1982.
- Sorrell, Walter. "The Dance: Phyllis Lamhut, Albert Reid, William Davis and Yvonne Rainer." *Dance Observer*, March 1963, 41.
- Spivey, Virginia. "The Minimal Presence of Simone Forti." *Women's Art Journal* 30, no. 1 (Spring/Summer 2009): 11–18.
- Stanford, Mariellen R., ed. *Happenings and Other Acts*. New York: Routledge, 1995.
- Stiles, Kristine. "Survival Ethos and Destruction Art." *Discourse* 14, no. 2 (Spring 1992): 74–102.
- . "At Last! A Great Woman Artist: Writing about Carolee Schneemann's Epistolary Practice." In *Singular Women: Writing the Artist*, edited by Kristen Frederickson and Sarah E. Webb, 213–37. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003.

- . "Uncorrupted Joy: International Art Actions." In Schimmel and Stiles, *Out of Actions*, 227–29.
- Stiles, Kristine, and Peter Selz, eds. *Theories and Documents of Contemporary Art: A Sourcebook of Artists Writings*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996.
- Stimson, Blake. *The Pivot of the World: Photography and Its Nation*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2006.
- . "A Photograph Is Never Alone." In *The Meaning of Photography*, edited by Robin Kelsey and Blake Stimson, 105–17. Williamstown, Mass.: Clark Art Institute, 2008.
- Stimson, Blake, and Alex Alberro, eds. *Conceptual Art: A Critical Anthology*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1999.
- Sullivan, Walter. "Adaptation Held Key to Survival." *New York Times*, 21 November 1965.
- Summers, Elaine. Interview by Tony Carruthers. "The Judson Project: Elaine Summers." Bennington, Vt.: Judson Project (Bennington College), 1983. New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, Jerome Robbins Dance Division. Videocassette. 50 minutes.
- Tarshis, Jerome. "San Francisco." *Artforum* 9, no. 6 (February 1971): 85.
- Terry, Walter. "Contemporary Dancers." *New York Herald Tribune*, n.d., n.p. on clipping, [1962]. In Rainer clippings file, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, Jerome Robbins Dance Division.
- Thompson, MJ. "New Work, Historical Pairing: Deborah Hay and Yvonne Rainer with MJ Thompson." *Brooklyn Rail*, November 2009. Accessed 4 April 2010. <http://www.brooklynrail.org/2009/11/dance/new-work-historical-pairing>.
- Tomkins, Calvin. *The Bride and the Bachelors: Five Masters of the Avant-Garde*. New York: Penguin, 1976.
- Towarnicki, Frédéric de. "A Talk with Konrad Lorenz." Translated by Stanley Hochman. *New York Times Magazine*, 5 July 1970, 4–5, 27, 29.
- Traymore, Bonnie L. "Dangerously Sensual: The Sexual Revolution, Feminism, and Grrl Power in Postwar America." PhD diss., University of Hawai'i, 2003.
- Ursprung, Philip. "'Catholic Tastes': Hurting and Healing the Body in Viennese Actionism in the 1960s." In Jones, *Performing the Body / Performing the Text*, 140–53.
- Vásquez, Adolfo Sánchez. *Art and Society: Essays in Marxist Aesthetics*. 1965. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1973.
- Vaughn, David, and Melissa Harris. *Merce Cunningham: Fifty Years*. New York: Aperture, 1997.
- Vostell, Wolf. *Environnements / Happenings, 1958–1974*. Translated by Sabine Wolf. Paris: Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, 1974.
- Wagner, Anne M. "According to What." *Artforum* 45, no. 3 (November 2006): 272–77.
- . "Bourgeois Prehistory." *Oxford Art Journal* 22, no. 2 (1999): 5–23.
- . *Mother Stone: The Vitality of Modern British Sculpture*. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2005.
- . "Performance, Video, and the Rhetoric of Presence." *October* 91 (Winter 2000): 59–80.
- . "Rodin's Reputation." In *Eroticism and the Body Politic*, edited by Lynn Hunt, 191–242. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991.
- . *Three Artists, Three Women: Modernism in the Art of Hesse, Krasner, and O'Keeffe*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996.
- Wagstaff, Samuel. "Paintings to Think About." *ArtNews*, January 1964, 38, 62.
- Ward, Frazer. "False Intimacies, Open Secrets: Public and Private in the Performance Art of Vito Acconci and Chris Burden." PhD diss., Cornell University, 2000.
- . *No Innocent Bystanders: Performance Art and Audience*. Lebanon, N.H.: Dartmouth College Press, 2012.
- Waring, James, John Herbert McDowell, Judith Dunn, Arlene Croce, and Don McDonagh, participants. "Judson: A Discussion." *Ballet Review* 1, no. 6 (1967): 30–53.
- White, Michael. *Empty Seats*. London: Hamish Hamilton, 1984.
- Whitebook, Joel. "Michel Foucault: A Marcusean in Structuralist Clothing." *Thesis Eleven*, November 2002, 52–70.
- Withers, Josephine. "Feminist Performance Art: Performing, Discovering, Transforming Ourselves." In *The Power of Feminist Art: the American Movement of the 1970s, History and Impact*, edited by Norma Broude and Mary D. Garrard, 158–73. New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1994.
- Wiegand, Ingrid. "Vito Acconci Finally Finds Himself through Others." *Village Voice*, 18 October 1976, 54.
- Wood, Marnie. "Marnie Wood." In *Martha Graham: The Evolution of Her Dance Theory and Training*, edited by Marian Horosko, 105–8. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2002.
- "Le Workshop de la libre expression." *France Observateur*, 4 June 1964, n.p. Box 64, folder 1: "Clippings, 1962–64." Carolee Schneemann Papers. Getty Research Institute Special Collections.

- Worth, Libby, and Helen Poynor. *Anna Halprin*. New York: Routledge, 2004.
- Wright, Alastair. *Matisse and the Subject of Modernism*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2004.
- Wylie, Philip. *The Magic Animal*. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1968.
- Yang, Mina. "Harry Partch, the Hobo Orientalist." In *California Polyphony: Ethnic Voices, Musical Crossroads*, 55–56. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2008.
- Young, LaMonte. "Lecture 1960." *Tulane Drama Review* 10, no. 2 (Winter 1965): 75.

INDEX

Citations in *italics* are figure numbers.

Abstract Expressionism, 3, 10,

11, 37, 38, 90, 138, 140, 187n10;

Greenberg on, 39–40, 90, 187n25.

See also specific artists

abstraction, 2–3, 9–22, 65, 74, 135, 163, 164–165; Acconci and, 134, 135–140, 143 156, 159, 163; capitalism and, 9, 134, 164, 185n40; conceptual art and, 131, 159; Debord and, 22, 24–26; embodiment as, 17–18, 26, 83, 159, 163; language as, 136, 137; Lefebvre's discussion of, 14–16; Marx and, 164–67; material accident as source of, 2, 12, 90, 134, 168; minimalism and, 69, 74; modernist poetry and, 136–37, 199n37; painting and, 35–37, 65, 88, 88–93, 119, 140; Paxton and, 61; photography and, 28; Rainer and, 30, 34, 65, 74; Schneemann and, 81, 82, 88–93, 134, 135; *Spiraling Down* and, 181–82. *See also specific artists*

accident. *See* abstraction: material accident as source of

Acconci, Vito, 122–163; abstraction and, 134, 135–140, 143, 156, 159, 163; antibehaviorism and, 157–159; conceptual art and, 130–132, 139–40, 142–143, 160, 163; criticism for *Artnews*, 139–40; dialectic between structure and physicality, 13, 18–19, 130, 139; education,

135; and embodiment, 26–27, 159–60, 162; and everyday life in art, 160; John Gibson Gallery exhibition, 155–56; and Johns' work, 138–39; and language, 137–40, 199n42; and minimalism, 144; modernism of, 128, 132, 139, 156, 160; performance of symptom, 6, 20, 23, 25–26, 129; poetry, 135–139; poststructuralism and, 129–30, 133; and Pound, 135–36, 138, 139, 156; *Software* exhibition, 151; *Street Works* exhibition, 141–43, 145–47, 152; WORKS: *Blindfolded Catching*, 122–25, 77; *Centers*, 153–54; *Conversions*, 163; *Following Piece*, 145–47, 156, 159, 89, 90, 91; *Hand & Mouth*, 122–23, 126–27, 154, 79, 97; *Lay of the Land*, 144, 88; *Performance* (*Sitting, Undergoing, Going Under*), 147, 93; *Performance Test*, 147–48, 94; *Points, Blanks*, 143–44; *Proximity Piece*, 151, 159, 99, 100; *Run-Off*, 150–51, 98; *Seedbed*, 163; *A Situation Using Streets, Walking, Glancing*, 141; *A Situation Using Streets, Walking, Running*, 141, 156, 85; *Soap & Eyes*, 5–6, 122–23, 125–26, 4, 78; "Some Notes on Activity and Performance," 154–56, 158; *Specification Piece*, 122, 159, 127–29, 132, 148, 149, 151, 159, 80; *Step Piece*, 148–49; 95, 96; *Supply Room*, 163; 35 *Approaches*, 151–53, 159, 101, 102; 3 *Adaptation Studies*, 122–129, 132, 140, 149, 76; *Twelve*

Pictures, 143, 159, 87; *Untitled* poem (1968), 136–137

adaptation, 13, 128, 129, 155, 156, 157, 158, 197n3&n4, 198n30. *See also* Acconci, Vito: 3 *Adaptation Studies*

Adorno, Theodor, 11, 31, 74

advertising, 3, 5, 9, 22, 26, 41, 80

aesthetic, the, 29, 166–67

Alexander, Robert, 30, 33, 16, 46

All of Me (film), 175–177, 180, 114

Althusser, Louis, 129, 132

Arnold, Becky, 45

art history. *See* history of art

Ames, Van Meter, 9–10

Andre, Carl, 130, 81

antibehaviorism, 157–58, 159

appropriation, 13; in Levine's work, 180; for Marx, 166–67; sensuous, 83, 166; for Rainer, 170–71, 176–78, 180–81, 202n11

Architectural League, 141, 145

Artaud, Antonin, 84, 117,

196n105&n106

Art & Language, 139

Art and Literature, 139, 199n43

Artnews, 50, 139, 140, 199n48

ASCO, collective, 26

Ashbery, John, 139, 199n43

Ashton, Jennifer, 136, 137, 199n37

assemblage, 87, 91, 93

Auffrey, Danielle, 102

autonomy, 31, 57, 179. *See also* distance between art and life

Avalanche Magazine, 31, 129, 197n2

avant-garde art, 3, 7, 10, 20, 53, 80, 117, 118

- Bach, Johann Sebastian, 64, 98, 194n64
- Baker, Ella, 18
- Balanchine, George, 168
- ballet, 102, 168, 174, 177, 178, 179, 183n5, 203n31; Paxton's relationship with, 58, 59; Rainer's relationship with, 40, 44, 50, 71, 168, 188n33, 190–91n128; Schneemann's relationship with, 94, 95, 99–100
- Banes, Sally, 19, 20, 23, 40, 98
- Barbara Gladstone Gallery, New York, 152
- Barber, Samuel, 43
- Barry, Robert, 52, 159
- Barthes, Roland, 28
- Baryshnikov Arts Center, 171, 106, 110, 111
- Baryshnikov, Mikhail, 168, 177, 187n8
- beach movies and television, 80, 115, 191–92n9, 74; *Meat Joy* references to, 103, 109
- beatnik culture, 123
- behaviorism, 157, 158. *See also* antbehaviorism
- Berenson, Paulus, 53
- Berkeley, Busby, 81, 107, 119
- Berlioz, Hector, 53, 61
- Bernhardt, Sarah, 175, 180
- Bikini Beach* (film), 191n9, 74
- black power movement, 131
- Bladen, Ronald, 37, 19
- Bochner, Mel, 132, 83
- body, the, 83, 85, 167; abstract art and, 74, 76; in Acconci's Untitled poem (1968), 137; aging, 174; for antbehaviorism, 158; in Butler, 15–17, 129–30, 133; in Childs' work, 94, 95; in civil rights movement protest, 18, 19; collapsing/exhausted, 130, 132, 149, 153–54, 155; concrete, 17, 19, 28, 135, 160, 163, 186n66; in consumer culture, 77, 115; in Cunningham's work, 43, 53, 179; dancer's, 47, 57, 94–95; everyday or ordinary, 2–3, 13, 19, 57, 63, 74, 76, 81–82, 94, 95, 101, 102, 115, 119, 171; everyday or ordinary (for Paxton), 59–61, 63; everyday or ordinary in Rainer's work, 30, 35, 63, 65, 71, 76, 171, 174; "explicit," 186n66; for Foucault, 81, 129–30; gendered, 176–77, 178; for Graham, 41–42, 76; in Halprin's work, 57, 189n88; and identity, 27, 181; and language, 16, 95–96, 99–100, 133, 140, 197n10; in Lefebvre's writings, 14, 16, 191n2; limits of, 127, 130, 140, 144, 154, 158, 159, 163; as material in Acconci's art, 140, 144, 149–53; as material in art, 2, 10–12, 19, 28–29, 31, 71, 162, 168; as material in Rainer's art, 33, 62–63, 71–72, 73, 74, 168; as material in Schneemann's art, 81–82, 88, 93, 96, 97, 101, 102, 115, 119; as matter, 7, 31, 70, 73–74, 81, 114–15, 156; minimalist, 35, 70; in modernism, 36; in modernist art, 6–7, 38, 87, 179; in Piper's work, 160–62; and photographic media, 28–29, 30, 174, 181; for Reich/Reichians, 79, 81, 85, 194n49, 193n37; Schneemann's writing about, 85, 88; as sign or signifying, 15, 41–42, 47, 52, 63, 74, 86, 94, 95, 101, 103, 106, 112, 119, 121, 133, 135, 137, 139, 149, 157, 170, 181; skin color, 162; spasmodic, 156; structured by culture, 77, 79, 80, 81, 132, 133, 159; unintended movement of, 6, 10, 13, 53, 81, 94, 106, 112–13, 115, 119, 156–57, 159, 194n49; unintended movement of, in Acconci, 122, 123–24, 126, 127, 129, 140, 149–51, 154, 155, 156–59, 163, 201n87; unintended movement of, in Rainer, 26, 33, 35, 53, 62–63, 71–73, 181; unintended movement of, in Schneemann, 5, 81, 99, 101, 102, 115, 119. *See also* specific performance artists
- "body art," 131, 156, 198n20
- Bowles, John, 160
- Brecht, George, 117
- Brook, Peter, 118
- Brown, Helen Gurley, 192n9
- Brown, Trisha, 47, 53, 94, 98, 183–84n18, 189n90, 30, 33
- Brown, Wendy, *Politics Out of History*, 162
- Bruce, Lenny, 170
- Bryan-Wilson, Julia, 187n8
- Buchanan, Nancy, 26
- Buck-Morss, Susan, 29
- Burton, Scott, 147; *Ear Piece*, 145; *Individual Behavior Tableaux*, 200n69; *Self-Work: Dream*, 145, 92
- Butler, Judith, 17, 129–30, 133, 134, 181; the body, 15–17; *Bodies that Matter*, 15–16; *Gender Trouble*, 16, 158, 181, 186n66
- Cage, John, 8, 9, 30, 45, 56, 59, 94; critical responses to, 10; *Fontana Mix*, 45–46, 27; *Suite for five*, 179; *Variations V*, 58
- capitalism, 19, 26, 27, 163, 166; abstractions of, 134; Debord's critique of, 22, 185n56; in Fer's *The Infinite Line*, 198n27
- Catterson, Ideen, 175, 113
- Catterson, Pat, 169, 171, 175, 177–78, 187n8, 203n31, 106, 111
- Centre Américain des Artistes, 101, 117
- Certeau, Michel de, 170
- Cézanne, Paul, 7, 8, 10, 11, 15, 83, 87, 187n25; WORKS: *Madame Cézanne*, 6, 5; *Mont Sainte-Victoire Seen from Les Lauves*, 9
- civil rights movement protest, 3, 18, 162, 11, 105
- Chew, Sandra, 102
- Childs, Lucinda, 95–96, 98, 99–100, 189n90, 37, 56; *Carnation*, 94, 55
- Chomsky, Noam, 157, 158, 159
- Clark, T. J., 7–8, 19, 24, 74, 39, 74, 203n37
- Coates, Emily, 169, 177–78, 203n31, 106, 109, 111
- Cohen, Robert D., 102
- Cold War, 11, 12
- communism, 165–67
- conceptual art, 130–33, 134, 139, 140, 142, 145–47, 167, 184n39; Acconci within, 11, 12, 134, 143
- concrete, the, 2, 16, 186n66; art and, 19, 31, 36, 87, 88, 133, 134, 164–65, 167; in Johns, 138–39; in Reich, 86, 194n49
- concrete poetry, 11, 135
- Corner, Philip, 94, 97, 57
- Court, Paula, photographs, 106, 111
- Crary, Jonathan, 23
- Cubism and Cubist painters, 10, 37, 39, 183n5
- Cunningham, Merce, 41, 43, 45, 47, 58, 60, 101; company, 57, 101; Paxton and, 57–61; Rainer and, 52–53, 61, 179–80; Studio, 184n20. WORKS: *Antic Meet*, 35; *Collage*, 58; *Suite for five*, 171, 179, 180; *Variations V*, 58
- Dada, 116. *See also* Schwitters, Kurt
- Darwin, Charles, 157, 201n93
- Davis, William, 64–65, 1, 38
- de Kooning, Willem. *See* Kooning, Willem de
- Debord, Guy, 20–22, 23, 75, 130; *Society of the Spectacle*, 20, 22, 24–26, 74, 160, 163
- Delanghe, Gay, 45
- Delany, Samuel R., 184n40
- Denis, Romain, 102
- desire, 25, 160, 182; in Acconci's work, 13, 26, 127, 128–29, 133, 134, 135, 140–43, 145–47, 151–54, 159, 163; as concrete/social, 16, 19, 24, 27, 75, 134, 163, 164; erotic/sexual, 26, 77, 80, 191n2; for form, 36; in Schneemann's understanding of her work, 102, 103; in Skinner/behaviorism, 157
- dialectic between structure and physicality, *also* dialectic between abstraction and particularity, *also* dialectic between concept and feeling, 2, 8, 13, 18–19; in Acconci's work, 130, 139; in Cunningham's work, 179; in Lefebvre, 15; in Marx, 165; in modernist abstract painting, 36, 37–38; in Pollock, 8, 39–40, 73–74; in Rainer's work, 73–74, 76, 176, 181–82; in Schneemann's work, 102, 105, 119
- Dine, Jim, 12, 91, 119
- Dio, Harry de, 169
- distance between art and life, 2, 10, 31, 40, 66, 94–95, 178. *See also* autonomy
- Duchamp, Marcel, 116

- Dunn, Robert (Bob); classes, 45–46, 53, 57, 59–60
- Dwan Gallery, 122, 127, 132
- Dworkin, Craig, 135, 197n10, 199n42
- earthworks artists, 156
- embodiment, 133, 171, 186n65; as an abstraction, 17–19, 26–28, 83, 159, 162–163; in Lefebvre, 14, 16
- Emerson, Ruth, 98, 99–100, 194n73
- Engels, Friedrich, 197n4
- ethology, 158
- everyday life, the everyday, 17, 52, 65, 82, 83, 164, 179, 183n5; in art of 1960s, 1–3, 8–10, 26, 41, 65, 88, 143, 157; in art history of 1960s art, 19–20, 184–85n40; the body and, 13, 30, 63, 74, 81, 160, 163; for Certeau, 170; Debord's critique of, 20, 22, 25–26; for Lefebvre, 14–16, 18–19, 22, 25, 76; in minimalism, 68. *See also* the body: everyday or ordinary; the body: consumer culture; distance between art and life; non-art; ordinary movement, in Paxton's work; *under specific artists*
- expression, expressionism, expressionist, 6, 41, 86, 116, 127, 156; for Adorno, 31, 74; anti-, 30; "Conceptual," 156; in dance, 33, 40–43, 47, 72–73; in Darwin, 201n87; Festival of Free Expression, *also* Workshop of Free Expression, 84, 101–2, 116, 117, 195n85; hyper-, 75, 172; impassive/impersonal, 62, 64, 70, 71, 129; involuntary, 50, 52, 101, 112, 154; of materials, 10, 11, 118; nontraditional, 40, 43, 45, 47–48, 63, 139, 154, 183n10; refusal of, 52, 56–57, 60–61, 67, 69, 75–76, 201n85; self-, 133; trauma and, 26. *See also* Abstract Expressionism; desire
- Farocki, Harun, 203n20
- feeling, 9, 18, 35, 76, 197m10, 201n87; art and, 127, 139–40, 151; and advertising, 41; in Greenberg's criticism, 2, 10, 39–40, 61–62, 160, 188n26; in Rainer's work compared with Paxton's, 63–64; and spectacle, 181
- feminism, 15, 26, 94, 130–31, 192n12; Acconci and, 130–31, 159, 160, 163; Butler's, 15; Johnston's, 118; performance art, 186n66; Rainer's, 163, 168, 203n28; Schneemann's, 82–83, 119, 121, 163, 192n19&22
- Festival of Free Expression. *See under* Lebel, Jean-Jacques
- Firestone, Shulamith, 130, 194n66, 197n4
- Fleming, Sherman, 26
- Fluxus artworks, 9, 94
- Forti, Simone, 53, 57, 68; *See-saw*, 50, 68, 29
- Foster, Hal, 185n59
- Foster, Susan Leigh, 43, 63
- Foucault, Michel, 26, 80–81, 88, 118, 129–30, 158, 162, 185n60, 191n2
- Frampton, Hollis, 46, 52
- Franko, Mark, 188n30&n49
- Fried, Michael, 69, 90
- Friedan, Betty, 77; *The Feminine Mystique*, 80
- Gaisseau, Pierre Dominique, 102
- gender, 16, 66, 80, 83, 168; in Acconci's work, 133, 148, 152, 160, 163; in *All of Me*, 176; in *Meat Joy*, 26, 114–15; in Paxton's *Word Words*, 61. *See also* Butler, Judith: *Gender Trouble*. *See also under* body, the
- gesture, 13, 18–19, 32–33, 74, 87–88, 135, 137, 181
- Getty Research Institute, 48, 188–89n52, 202n16
- Geyer, Andrea, photograph, 110
- Gibson, John, 147, 200n74&n78; John Gibson Gallery, 155–56
- Giese, Al, 98, 112; photographs, 1, 3, 28, 33, 38, 47, 48, 58, 65, 68, 69, 70, 75
- Gochenauer, Stanley, 102
- Goffmann, Erving, 198n22
- Goldensohn, Barry, photographs, ii, 14, 44
- Gordon, David, 33, 187n8, 15
- Graham, Martha, 11, 12, 41–42, 57, 60, 188n30&n38, 23; Rainer's relationship to, 11, 40–45, 47, 52, 76; School, 11, 42; WORKS: *Cave of the Heart*, 43, 24, *Clytemnestra*, 43
- Green Gallery, 68, 39, 41
- Greenberg, Clement, 2, 7, 61, 160; critique of non-art, 10, 11; on modernist painting, 39–40, 90, 187n25, 199n43
- Gross, Sally, 53, 32, 37
- Group for Research on Everyday Life, 22
- Halprin, Anna, 30, 45, 47, 53, 56, 57
- Hammons, David, 26
- happenings, 9, 116, 193n27&28; by Kaprow, 3, 19–20, 94, 183n15, 12; by Lebel, 117; Schneemann and, 11, 12, 84, 95, 98, 102, 118–19, 195n82; by Vostell, 117
- Hay, Alex, 32, 37
- Hay, Deborah, 59, 95, 98, 99, 189n65, 32, 37, 56
- Held, Al, 11, 12, 37–39; WORKS: *Untitled* (1950–52), 37–38, 20; *Untitled* (1956), 38, 21
- Hesse, Eva, 83, 155
- Higgins, Dick, 194n66
- history, 8, 15, 19, 26, 28, 133, 162, 171, 181; Acconci's, 135; art as representative of, 6; of black Americans, 162; dance, 43, 50, 174, 188n30; Firestone on, 197n4; Graham's, 41; Lefebvre on, 76; Marx on, 165–66, 182; modernist past, 11, 39, 73, 92, 186n62; natural, 31; present period, 27; Rainer's, 36, 53, spectacle and, 185n56. *See also* Foucault, Michel
- history of art, art history, 9, 12, 20, 35, 39, 163, 186n66
- Hoffbauer, Patricia, 48, 169, 177–78, 106, 109, 111
- humanism, 166
- Hutchins, Claudia, 102
- illegibility, 35, 71, 74
- impersonality, 10, 40, 139, 180; in Acconci's work, 129, 134, 156–57, 159–60, 163; in modern dance, 11–12, 41–42, 47, 188n30; in Rainer's work, 30, 77; in Schneemann's work, 88, 119
- Impressionists, 88, 187n25
- Index, indexical, 168; cards, 8, 139
- Information show at MoMA, 122, 132
- Interfunktionen, 130, 154, 81
- Internationale Situationniste, 116
- involuntary movement. *See* body, the: unintended movement of
- Jackson, Betsy, photographs, 89, 90
- Jepson, Warner, photographs, 25, 26
- Jewish Museum, New York, 138, 151, 183n13, 99, 100
- John Gibson Gallery. *See under* Gibson, John
- Johns, Jasper, 137–39, 156, 199n42; WORKS: *Fool's House*, 91–92, 53; *Target with Plaster Casts*, 138, 84
- Johnston, Jill, criticism: on Cunningham, 58; on Rainer, 62, 63–65; on Schneemann, 98–99, 118–19
- Jones, Amelia, 28
- Joseph, Branden, 23
- Judd, Donald, 2, 68, 185n59
- Judson Dance Theater, Judson Dance Workshop, 23, 53, 63, 69, 94, 98, 100, 102; influence of, 168, 177
- Judson Memorial Church, 12, 53, 102, 191n3, 1, 3, 15, 33, 36, 38, 40, 47, 48, 55, 58–73, 75
- Kahn, Doug, 196n106
- Kaprow, Allan, 3, 8, 12, 38, 39, 88, 119, 183n14, 193n28; art historical account of, 19–20; *The Courtyard*, 19–20; 94, 12
- King, Martin Luther, 83, 130
- Kinsey, Alfred, 80
- Klein, Melanie, 185–86n60
- Klein, Yves, 103–4
- Koestler, Arthur, 157
- Kooning, Willem de, 11, 187n25
- Kosuth, Joseph, *One and Three Chairs*, 132, 134, 82
- Kotz, Liz, 140
- Krauss, Rosalind, 67, 185n59
- Kupferberg, Tuli, 191n3
- Lacy, Suzanne, 26
- Lambert-Beatty, Carrie, 19, 20, 23, 28, 34

- language, verbal, 16, 35, 74, 76, 88; in art, 95, 100, 122, 128–29, 132–33, 139, 140, 165, 183n5; in Marx on the aesthetic, 166–67. *See also* under abstraction; Acconci, Vito; body, the
- language poetry, 136–37
- League for Sexual Freedom, 191n3
- Lebel, Jean-Jacques, 83–4, 117, 119, 193n28&n32, 196n107; Festival of Free Expression, Workshop of Free Expression, 84, 101–2, 116, 117, 195n85
- Lefebvre, Henri, 14–16, 18–19, 76, 77, 82, 132, 134, 191n2; Debord and, 20, 22, 24, 25, 130
- lesbian sexuality, 15, 118, 168, 203n28
- Levine, Sherrie, 168, 180
- Lewin, Kurt, 197n13
- LeWitt, Sol, 134, 139, 140, 155, 200n75
- Linker, Kate, 197n10, 198n21
- Lippard, Lucy, 68, 139, 184n39, 192n19
- literalness, 2, 7, 8, 10, 12, 136, 186n66; in Acconci's work, 127, 135–7; minimalist, 67, 68, 70; in Reich, 79; in Schneemann's painting, 90, 93
- Living Theatre, 97, 193n28, 57
- Lloyd, Barbara, 45
- Loeb Student Center, NYU, 147, 93
- Lorenz, Konrad, 158; *On Aggression*, 158
- Lowen, Alexander, 85–86
- McClure, Michael, 84, 117
- McDowell, John Herbert, 60
- McElroy, Robert, photographs, 95, 29, 56
- Mahaffay, Marni, 53
- Malevich, Kasimir, 35–36; *Suprematist Painting*, 17
- Malinowski, Bronislaw, 80
- Manet, Édouard, 7
- Marcuse, Herbert, 10, 11, 80
- Marks, Marcia, 47, 48, 50, 51
- Martha Graham School. *See* under Graham, Martha
- Martin, John, 40, 42
- Martin, Mark, 17, 11
- Martin, Ronald, 17, 11
- Martin, Steve, 169, 175–77, 114
- Marx, Karl, 25, 79, 83; on the aesthetic, 166–67, 180; historical method, 165–66, 182; "To Jenny," 164–165
- Marxism, 7, 24
- materiality, matter. *See* under body, the. *See* dialectic between structure and physicality
- Matisse, Henri, *The Dance*, 179, 180, 181, 117
- Mauss, Marcel, 174
- Mayer, Bernadette, 150, 199n43, 98
- medium. *See* body, the: as material in art; Clark, T. J.
- Meltzer, Eve, 74, 132, 140
- memory, 20, 116, 171
- mental illness, insanity, 48, 51, 52, 53, 73
- Meyer, James, 185n59
- minimalism, 10, 66–70, 144, 185n59, 190n118, 43. *See also* specific minimalist artists
- Mitchell, Jack, photograph, 35
- Mitchell, Joan, 2
- modern dance, 11, 40, 57, 59, 71, 94, 168, 177. *See also* Graham, Martha; Cunningham, Merce
- modernism, 8, 10, 11, 16, 24–25, 36, 41, 83. *See also* under Acconci, Vito; body, the; Rainer, Yvonne; Schneemann, Carolee
- modernist art, 2, 3, 6–8, 12, 13, 15, 28, 36–37, 52, 83, 164, 166, 168, 179; poetry, 139; postmodernist critique of, 180. *See also* abstraction: in modernist poetry; abstraction: in painting; Clark, T. J.; dialectic between structure and physicality; Greenberg, Clement; impersonality; modern dance; Pound, Ezra; *specific artists*
- modernist models, persistence of, 25, 26, 31, 39, 40, 73, 134; in Johns, 139
- Moore College of Art in Philadelphia, 122, 151, 101, 102
- Moore, Lillian, 47, 48, 51
- Moore, Peter, 53, 63, 101, 112, 113; photographs 15, 32, 34, 37, 40, 45, 55, 59, 60, 62, 71, 73, 92, 108
- Morris, Robert, 8, 12, 44, 53, 66–70, 71, 73, 145; as performer, 50, 63, 29, 32, 37; *WORKS: Column*, 68, 189n65, 42; *Untitled (Table)*, 39; Green Gallery exhibition, 41
- Mumma, Gordon, 190n95
- Murakami, Haruki, 171–72
- Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), 91, 122, 132
- Nauman, Bruce, 52
- need. *See* Debord, Guy; Lefebvre, Henri; Marx, Karl
- Nemser, Cindy, 131, 132
- Nengudi, Senga, 26, 13
- New York City, 1, 11–12
- New York School painting, 37. *See also* Abstract Expressionism; Greenberg, Clement
- Newton, Richard, 26
- Nijinsky, Vaslav, 168, 170, 180
- Noblet, Jocelyn de, 85
- Noguchi, Isamu, 42, 24
- non-art, 8, 10, 53, 93, 95, 180. *See also* everyday life
- Nosei, Annina, 102
- O'Donnell, Tom, 102
- O'Hara, Frank, 136
- O'Keeffe, Georgia, 83
- Oldenburg, Claes, 12, 19, 184n40; Ray Gun Theatre performances, 83, 193n28
- Oppenheim, Dennis, 156
- ordinary movement, in Paxton's work, 61. *See also* under Rainer, Yvonne
- Owens, Craig, 180
- Paik, Nam June, 190n95
- painting, 1, 7, 12, 15, 29, 50, 116, 119, 166, 183n5; Acconci reviews of, 139–40; Acconci's *Run-off* as, 150–51; Lebel's, 193n28, 196n109. *See also* under abstraction; Rainer, Yvonne; Schneemann, Carolee. *See also* Acconci, Vito; and Johns' work; Clark, T. J.; dialectic between structure and physicality: in modernist abstract painting; Greenberg, Clement: on modernist painting; *specific artists*
- Patterson, Robert, 17, 11
- Paula Cooper Gallery, 143–44
- Paxton, Steve, 52, 53, 57–63, 65, 71, 94, 101, 172, 35; performer in Rainer's work, 33, 1, 15; *Proxy*, 57–58; *Word Words*, 60–61, 36
- performance art, 2, 8, 12, 13, 14, 26, 157, 184n39; for camera, 124; documentation, 29, 156, 168, 195n91; and minimalist sculpture, 66, 75; and photographic media, 28–29, 143, 144; and poetry, 135; Schneider on modernist art and, 186n66; Stiles on emergency and, 186n64. *See also* specific performance artists
- Péret, Benjamin, 193n28
- Perreault, John, 141, 158
- Phelan, Peggy, 184n39
- photography, 28–29, 31, 58, 71, 132, 144, 163, 174; as choreography source, 168, 170, 171, 172, 178, 180, 181; in Levine's work, 168, 180; Stimson on, 181. *See also* performance art: documentation
- Picard, Lil, 109
- Pierce, Charles Sanders, 201n87
- Piper, Adrian, 147, 160; *Catalysis*, 160–63, 104; *Proposal #1*, 142–43, 86
- Plath, Sylvia, 174
- Pollock, Jackson, 11, 73, 76, 196n105; Clark on, 7, 8, 74; Greenberg on, 10, 39–40, 90; Kaprow on, 88; *WORKS: Autumn Rhythm*, 39–40, 22; *Full Fathom Five*, 90, 52; *Number 1A*, 1948, 7, 8, 7; *Shimmering Substance*, 35–36, 18
- Pommerelle, Daniel, 102
- Pop art, 9, 183n13. *See also* Warhol, Andy
- popular culture, 19, 52, 183n5, 192n9; in Rainer's work, 169–71, 180, 202n11; in Schneemann's work, 77, 80, 81, 103, 109, 115, 119
- Posner, Irina, 102
- postminimalist artists, 155
- postmodern dance, 23. *See also* Halprin, Anna; Paxton, Steve; Rainer, Yvonne
- postmodern, the, 166, 170; Ashton on, 136–37; binaries of, 88, 91, 92, 186n66; critique, 22, 166, 180;

- deferred real, 28; Kaprow as illustration of, 19–20; literalness of, 136–37; surface emphasis, 181, 185n40. *See also* Levine, Sherrie; Saar, Betye
- poststructuralism, 15, 76, 129–30, 133, 186n66. *See also* Butler, Judith; Foucault, Michel
- post–World War II period, 7, 14, 35, 41, 52
- Potts, Alex, 19, 20, 185n45
- Pound, Ezra, 11, 135–36, 138, 139, 156, 201n87
- Presley, Elvis, music, 103
- primitivism, 35, 40–41, 57, 119, 168, 179, 180, 186n65; example of, 9
- psychoanalysis, 79, 86, 134, 188n32
- Rachmaninoff, Sergei, 48, 50
- Rainer, Yvonne, 2, 15, 20, 30–76, 94, 98, 101, 122, 139, 167; abstraction and, 30, 34, 65, 74, 134, 135; appropriation, 170–71, 176–77, 180–81, 202n11; Cunningham and, 11, 41, 43, 45, 47, 52–53, 61, 171, 178, 179–80; dialectic between structure and physicality, 13, 18–19, 73–74, 76, 176, 181–82; embodiment and, 26–28, 162; everyday life in art and, 8, 12, 65, 71, 76; films, 163, 168, 170; Graham and, 11, 40–45, 47, 52, 57, 76; Halprin and, 30, 45, 47, 53, 56–57; Held and, 11, 36–39; “Indexicals,” 168; Johnston’s criticism of, 63–65; Lambert-Beatty’s account of, 20, 23, 28, 34, 202n11; and minimalism, 11, 35, 66–70, 76, 98; modernism of, 2, 10, 11, 12, 31, 40, 57, 65, 73–74, 76, 180–81; Morris’s sculpture and, 66–70; ordinary movement, 52–57; painting and, 36–39, 40, 46, 73; Paxton and, 57, 59, 60–61, 63, 65, 172; performance of mental illness, 47, 52; performance of spastic other, 50–52; performance of symptom, 6, 20, 23, 25–26, 30, 75, 170; as performer in Schneemann’s work, 86, 97, 57; photographic media and, 71, 168–71, 180–81; response to Vietnam War, 28, 30; return to dance in 2000, 168; “tasklike” aesthetic, 15, 30, 31–34, 71–76, 124, 157, 174; WORKS: *AG Indexical (with a Little Help from H. M.)*, 168–69, 202n10; *The Bells*, 47–48, 190n124; *Chair-Pillow*, 31; *Continuous Project—Altered Daily*, 31; *The Mind Is a Muscle*, 31, 169, 171, 180, 40, 45, 107, 108; *Northeast Passing*, 31–33, 14, 44; *Ordinary Dance*, 53, 57; *Parts of Some Sextets*, 56, 34, *Performance Fractions for the West Coast*, 31; “A Quasi Survey of Some Minimalist Tendencies . . .,” 66–67, 69–71, 43; *RoS Indexical*, 168–69, 202n10; *Rose Fractions*, 31; *Satie for Two*, 47, 51, 30; *Spiraling Down*, 74, 168–182, 202n10&n16, 106, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 115, 116, 118; *Terrain*, 1–3, 5, 31, 53, 56, 63–64, 1, 33, 38; *Three Satie Spoons*, 43–48, 51–52, 57, 188n52, 25, 26; *Three Seascapes*, 47–51, 53, 65, 194n66, 28; *Trio A (The Mind is a Muscle, Part I)*, 23, 30, 31, 33–34, 43, 65, 66, 71, 73–75, 122, 169–71, 178, 181, 187n8, 10, 15, 16, 46; *Trio A with Flags*, 31; *WAR*, 31; *We Shall Run*, 53, 56–57, 60–63, 73, 31, 32, 37. *See also* Judson Dance Theater
- Ratner, Judy, 86, 97, 193n45, 194n66
- REDCAT theater, Los Angeles, 171, 178, 113
- Rauschenberg, Robert, 12, 58, 63, 183n13, 185n56, 189n90; as performer, 63, 32, 37; *Collection*, 91–92, 54
- Ravel, Maurice, 174
- Reich, Wilhelm, 76, 79–83, 85–86; Schneemann and, 88, 97, 98, 119
- Reichians, 76, 83, 85, 191n3, 193n34, 193n37. *See also* Lowen, Alexander
- Renoir, Rita, 102, 195n84
- Restany, Pierre, 86, 195n84
- Richard, Claude, 102
- Robinson, Paul, 86, 191n3
- rock and roll, 77, 85, 116
- Rockburne, Dorothea, 102, 69
- Rodenbeck, Judith, 19–20
- Rodin, Auguste, 10, 83; *Walking Man*, 6, 6
- Romanticism, 118, 127, 136, 148
- Rosenberg, Harold, 38
- Rosler, Martha, 26
- Rothlein, Arlene, 98, 194n66&n73
- Saar, Betye, 168
- Sabado, Keith, 171, 178, 109
- Sadler, Simon, 185n50, 186n61
- San Francisco Bay Area, 36, 37, 44, 198n20
- Sandler, Irving, 187n14
- Satie, Eric, 45–48, 51–52, 183n9, 188n52, 25, 26, 30, 57,
- Sayre, Henry, 192n20
- Schapiro, Steve, photograph, 97, 57
- Schlichter, Joseph, 32, 37
- Schneemann, Carolee, 77–121, 139; abstraction and, 81, 82, 88–93, 134, 135; critical response (negative) to, 115–119; dancers as performers and, 94–96; dialectic between structure and physicality, 13, 18–19, 102, 105, 119; education, 87; embodiment and, 26–27, 162; everyday life/materials in art and, 12, 88, 90–93, 95, 101, 119; feminism, 82–83, 119, 121, 163, 192n19&22; Johnston’s criticism of, 98–99, 118–119; Judson Dance Theater and, 98, 100; modernism of, 81–83, 85, 86–88, 90, 93, 95, 102–3, 104, 119, 121, 186n66; painting practice, 84, 87–93, 95, 98, 101; performance of symptom, 6, 20, 23, 25–26; popular culture and, 77, 78, 81, 103, 109, 115, 116, 119; Reich and, 78–79, 81–83, 85–86, 88, 97–99, 119; sex and, 77–78, 84, 88, 101, 106–7, 119, 121; 13, 18–19, 102, 105, 119; writings, 85, 86, 88, 94; WORKS: *Chromelodeon*, 95–96, 98–100, 101, 56; *An Environment for Sounds and Motions* (aka *Glass Environment for Sound and Motion*), 86, 96–98, 57; *Eye Body*, 118, 192n19; *Fuses*, 82; *Interior Scroll*, 82–83; *JT and Three Kitch’s*, 84, 49; *Lateral Splay*, 100–101, 59; *Meat Joy*, 5, 77–78, 81–86, 100–120, 122, 195n83, 3, 47, 48, 60–73, 75; *Newspaper Event*, 98, 58; *Quarry Transposed (Central Park in the Dark)*, 88–93, 95, 115, 119, 51; *Three Figures After Pontormo*, 50
- Schneider, Rebecca, 28, 186n66, 186n73, 192n22
- Schroeder, Manfred, photographs, 66, 67
- Schwitters, Kurt, 183n5 sculpture, 1, 7, 12, 29, 64, 75, 138, 183n5; Acconci reviews of, 139; Greenberg on, 39, 183n14&n15; John Gibson Gallery exhibitions, 155; minimalist, 10, 66–70, 73, 144, 185n59, 190n125, 43. *See also specific artists*
- Schechner, Richard, 189n88
- Seiler, Jacques, 102, 195n86, 195n89
- Seitz, William, 91
- Selye, Hans, 123
- sensuous, the: in human practice, 2, 7–9, 12, 19, 25, 28, 35–36, 83, 88, 121, 166–167, 179, 186n66; in art, 8, 12, 167; in art of Acconci, 160; in art of Rainer 65, 74, 76, 182; in art of Schneemann, 87–88, 119; in conceptual art, 131–132, 134, 139
- Serra, Richard, 155
- sexual revolution, 77, 80, 82, 191n1, 191n4, 192n12, 192n23
- Shannon, Joshua, 19, 139, 184n40
- Sharaf, Myron, 193n34, 193n37
- Siegelaub, Seth, 139
- Silverman, Kaja, 28, 134
- Silvers, Sally, 169, 177–78, 181, 189n52, 203n27, 203n31, 106, 109, 111
- Simmel, Georg, 30
- Situationists, the, 20, 22, 24, 25, 116, 185n56, 186n62, 196n107
- skin color. *See under* body, the
- Skinner, B. F., 157, 159
- Small, Millie, 103, 115
- Smith, Barbara T., 26
- Smith, Michael, 115–116
- Smith, Peter Duval, 117–118
- Smithson, Robert, 159
- social constructionist shift, 11, 158–159, 197n10

- Software*, Jewish Museum, 151, 99, 100
- Solomon, Alan R., 9–10
- Sontag, Susan, 20
- Soutine, Chaim, 11, 84, 117
- spectacle, 16, 20–25, 28, 74–75, 116, 122, 134, 144, 163, 167, 170. *See also* Debord, Guy
- Speeth, Sheridan, 83
- Stiles, Kristine, 117, 186n64
- Stimson, Blake, 181, 199n51
- Stravinsky, Igor, 168
- Street Works* exhibitions, 141–43, 145, 147, 152, 160, 85, 89, 90, 92
- structure. *See* dialectic between structure and physicality
- Student Mobilization Committee to end the war in Vietnam, 144
- Sugarman, George, 37
- Summers, Carol, 95–96, 99, 194n73, 56
- Supremes, The, 103, 115
- Surrealism, 116
- symptomatic reading of artworks in art history, 19–20, 23, 24. *See also specific artists: performance of symptom*
- tasklike aesthetic. *See* Rainer, Yvonne: “tasklike” aesthetic
- television, 3, 9, 28, 30, 65, 80, 102, 117, 187n1; sexuality on, 80, 192n9; studios, 44, 102. *See also* beach movies and television
- Tenney, James, 83, 86, 94, 98, 102, 192n18, 61, 63; subject of painting, 84, 49
- Tharp, Twyla, 177
- Thek, Paul, 102
- Time* magazine, 77
- trauma, 26, 52, 162
- unintended movement. *See* body, the: unintended movement of
- University of California, Berkeley, 36, 185n45, 187n8, 188n38
- University of Strasbourg, 20
- VanDerBeek, Stan, 190n95
- Vázquez, Adolfo Sánchez, 166, 167
- Venice Biennale, 183n13
- video artworks, 28, 153, 163, 198n29, 200n73, 103
- Vietnam War, 28, 117, 130, 144, 163, 187n1
- Village Voice*, 44, 62, 98, 115
- Vorkapich, Slavko, 175
- Vostell, Wolf, 117, 119
- vulnerability, 17, 63; in Acconci’s work, 143, 154, 156; of body, 3, 6–7, 14, 30, 63, 82; in modernism, 11; in Piper’s work, 161–62; in Rainer’s work, 33, 35, 63, 76, 176, 178; in Schneemann’s work, 115; in sexual revolution, 80
- Wagner, Anne M., 61, 83, 193n25, 198n29, 200n66, 200n73
- Warhol, Andy, 8, 9, 145, 155, 8
- Waring, James, 188n32, 190n104, 190n112
- Watts, Robert, 117, 185n41
- White Oak Dance Project, 168, 177, 187n8
- White, Michael, 101, 118, 195n82, 197n116
- Wijers, Louwrien, 201n85
- Wilke, Hannah, 26
- Williams, William Carlos, 199n34
- Wilson, Ann, 102
- Worden, John, 99–100, 195n73
- Workshop of Free Expression. *See under* Lebel, Jean-Jacques
- World Performance Project, 171, 202n16
- Yam Festival, 117
- Young, La Monte, 48, 194n66
- Zucker, Harvey, photographs 61, 63, 64

ILLUSTRATION CREDITS

The photographers and the sources of visual material other than the owners indicated in the captions are as follows. Every effort has been made to supply complete and correct credits; if there are errors or omissions, please contact Yale University Press so that corrections can be made in any subsequent edition.

© Al Giese (figs. 1, 3, 28, 33, 38, 47, 48, 58, 65, 68, 69, 70, 75); © Estate of Rudy Burckhardt / Artist Rights Society (ARS), New York (fig. 2); © Acconci Studio (figs. 4, 76–80, 85, 87–91, 93–103); © 2015 Pollock-Krasner Foundation / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York, digital image © The Museum of Modern Art / Licensed by SCALA / Art Resource, New York (figs. 7, 18, 52); © 2015 The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc. / Artist Rights Society (ARS), New York, digital image © The Museum of Modern Art / Licensed by SCALA / Art Resource, New York (fig. 8); Photo Credit: Erich Lessing / Art Resource, New York (fig. 9); © Margo Shustak (fig. 12); © Barry Goldensohn (figs. 14, 44); Photo © Barbara Moore / Licensed by VAGA, New York (figs. 15, 32, 34, 37, 40, 45, 55, 59, 60, 62, 71, 73, 92, 108); © Yvonne Rainer (figs. 16, 31, 46); digital image © The Museum of Modern Art / Licensed by SCALA / Art Resource, New York (fig. 17); © The Estate of Ronald Bladen, LLC / Licensed by VAGA, New York (fig. 19); © 2015 Al Held Foundation, Inc. / Licensed by Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York (figs. 20, 21); © 2015 Pollock-Krasner Foundation / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York, image copyright © The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Image source: Art Resource, New York (fig. 22); © 2016 Estate of Warner Jepson. This work is reproduced and distributed with the permission of the Estate of Warner Jepson (figs. 25, 26); © John Cage Trust (fig. 27); © J. Paul Getty Trust (figs. 29, 56); © 2015 Jack Mitchell / Licensed by Highberger Media, Inc. (fig. 35); © 2015 Robert

Morris / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York (figs. 39, 41, 42); © C. Schneemann (figs. 49, 50, 51); Art © Jasper Johns / Licensed by VAGA, New York (figs. 54, 84); Image courtesy of SFMOMA. Photo by Ben Blackwell. Art © Robert Rauschenberg Foundation / Licensed by VAGA, New York (fig. 55); © Steve Schapiro (fig. 57); Art © Carl Andre / Licensed by VAGA, New York (fig. 81); Photo by Don Carter © 2015 Joseph Kosuth / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York (fig. 82); © Mel Bochner (fig. 83); © Adrian Piper Research Archive Foundation Berlin (fig. 86); © Adrian Piper Research Archive Foundation Berlin and Generali Foundation (fig. 104); © Don Cravens / Licensed by Getty Images (fig. 105); © Paula Court (figs. 106, 111); © Andrea Geyer (fig. 110); Photograph © 2016 Succession H. Matisse / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York and The State Hermitage Museum. Photo by Alexander Koksharov (fig. 117).